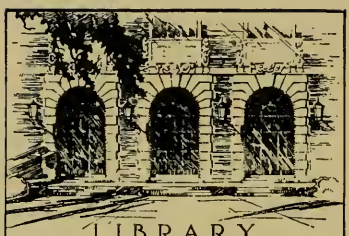

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JACQUELINE OF HOLLAND.

A HISTORICAL TALE.

BY

THOMAS COLLEY GRATTAN,

AUTHOR OF "THE HEIRESS OF BRUGES," &c.

Nought is there under Heaven's wide hollownesse
That moves more deare compassion of minde,
Than beautie brought t' unworthy wretchednesse,
Through envie's snares, or fortune's freakes unkinde.
I, whether lately through her brightnesse blynde,
Or through alleageance and faste fealtie,
Which I do owe unto all womankynde,
Feele my hart perst with so greate agonie
When such I see, that all for pitty I could dy.

Faerie Queene.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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JACQUELINE OF HOLLAND.

CHAPTER I.

It was Adrian Van Hemsted and some of his brother Hoeks, who, true to the unceremonious fidelity of the times, had burst into their sovereign's presence, arms in their hands, and fury in their hearts, on hearing that a suspicious-looking man had passed the guards by favour of the countess's well-known signet ring, and having their worst fears for her safety

confirmed, by discovering through the casement the hated badge of Burgundy on his breast. Countess Marguerite, hurrying from her own apartment, came close on their heels; and Benina Beyling soon made one in the court-retinue which thronged the scene of alarm.

In the confusion of the first moments Jacqueline could only interpose for Vrank's safety, by throwing herself among the group of furious partizans who had seized on him, and mingling commands and supplications for his being held harmless, with the loud vociferations of their rage.

"A Burgundian! A Kabblejaw! A Borselen!" were their first exclamations, as Vrank's person was recognised by those who had witnessed his brief appearance at the jay-shooting of Tergoes.

"Death! death! To the torture, to the torture!" were the next most distinguishable sounds.

"Bury him alive, as we did the traitor Beyling!" cried one.

"Let him be rolled through the streets in a spiked barrel," exclaimed another.

"Torture, torture! death, death! away with him!" chorused the whole party; while the harsh voice and harsher looks of Countess Marguerite sanctioned each and all of those ferocious proposals, and Jacqueline, supported by Benina, continued her strenuous efforts to interpose between the intended victim and his ready-made destroyers, and postpone, though she had faint hope of finally averting, his fate.

Vrank Van Borselen, though an extremely brave man, the common quality of the age, did not possess that fiery kind of valour which plunges and struggles with danger, sometimes succeeding to shake it off, but more commonly sinking under the violence it provokes. His courage was more reflective than impetuous; and instead now of wasting his strength in vain efforts to escape, or hurrying on his doom by word or action, he silently listened to the abuse, and passively submitted to the outrage of his assailants. But he all the while prepared both

mind and body for a concentrated effort at escape, if a possible opportunity presented itself, or for a dignified resignation to his fate, whatever it might be. That the latter was to be promptly decided and dreadful in its nature there seemed now little doubt!

"Away with him from this presence!" cried Countess Marguerite. "Let him die outside! Despatch him at once!"

A yell of fury answered this demoniac order; and Vrank was dragged out through the casement, despite the convulsive resistance to which he was urged by the horror of immediate death. He was conscious that his cheeks were blanched, for he felt the blood curdling round his heart. But, though he lost his colour, he did not lose his head, the true distinction between natural dread of death, and the power of mind by which it is mastered. His last look, as he was hurried away, was thrown back on Jacqueline, held forcibly in her mother's arms; and in the agonized expression of her pallid face, lit by the glare of torches, which were now lavishly brought

in, he read a farewell of consoling sympathy, that neutralized, if it could not reverse, the terrible sentence of destruction. As soon as he was dragged clear of the threshold, and the glass-door furiously closed by the last of the party, several swords were raised, and he saw them gleam as they clashed together to pierce him. But at this moment—the very hair-line verge between life and death—Ludwick Van Monfoort arriving on the spot, on hearing of the general disturbance, burst through the group, flung his broad bulk before the intended victim, whom he instantly recognized, and actually received on his armour-covered breast the points of more than one blade, which but for him had laid Vrank low for ever.

"What's this?" cried the intrepid Lord of Urk. "Murder on the threshold of the princess! Hear ye not her shrieks for mercy? Stand back, stand back! See how she rushes forth to save him!" and at the instant Jacqueline did indeed appear, loudly crying to the murderers, and breaking away from her mo-

ther's feeble efforts at detention, while Benina Beyling aided her merciful intentions by throwing aside the casement door, and giving her free egress to the garden. The baffled, but still furious Hoeks, turned for a moment at the piercing sound of their mistress's voice, and Vrank was not the man to let such a critical period pass without one desperate attempt for safety. His eye fixed on one of the long but light-handled halberds, used by the guards on duty in the palace, and which lay against the wall. Springing from the grasp of one man, who held by the collar of his cloak, the others having loosened their hold when preparing to put him to death, he bounded towards the weapon, which he relied on more as a means of aiding his escape than of successful defence; and seizing it in both hands, he swept it round and round with his utmost force, striking down more than one of his foes, and making a complete circle among the rest, that quite guaranteed him from their rapiers' reach. Profiting by the confusion and the space, he suddenly turned from the palace-

walls, bounded away with the agility of youth running for life, and was soon far down one of the principal avenues of the garden.

But he was as quickly pursued by several of his enemies, and ere he could gain much ground he heard the loud tramp of hostile feet close behind. Measuring the intervening distance with a keen eye, he wheeled suddenly round, stopped short, and received the first of his pursuers on the presented point of the halberd. Just extricating the blade from the body of the falling man, Vrank turned again and resumed his flight, having gained breath by the sudden check. As he ran along, two or three bullets, discharged from heavy arquebuses, with little chance of hitting their mark, cut through the fruit-tree branches beside his path, or ploughed up the ground close to his feet. But a more imminent peril awaited him at a cross avenue high shaded with fantastic holly-bushes, the end of which he was obliged to pass in his way towards the gate, where he dimly saw a sentinel standing in an attitude of defence, in obedience to the

loud cries of the chief, who warned him that the detected Kabblejaw was flying towards him. That danger Vrank quickly made up his mind to brave, thinking little of standing a flying shot from the clumsy weapon of an agitated arquebusier; but a chill struck through him, on finding that several of his pursuers, headed by Van Hemsted, had cut him short by the holly-bush walk just mentioned, and now darted out on him with drawn rapiers and looks of vengeance.

Away sprang Vrank once more, in an oblique direction from his former line of flight, and directly towards a wall full ten feet high, bounding the alley down which he ran, with more desperate speed than before, for he saw the figures of his pursuers glancing in various directions through the shrubs, and he felt himself so closely pressed that he heard the loud panting of a man almost in his very ear, and fancied that the warm breath blew upon his neck. A thrust of a sword's blade from behind and across his shoulder, which it just grazed, was the next hint of this terribly close neighbour; and a more

frightful proof was in another instant given by Vrank's cloak being seized by a powerful grasp, which checked back the wearer so suddenly that his head came violently in contact with his captor's face. This was Vrank's only chance for safety. Van Hemsted, for it was he whose young limbs, nerved by deadly hatred, had outstripped the fugitive, was for an instant stunned, and unable from the shock to gain immediate command of his weapon. Vrank felt his advantage, but would not risk it by pushing it too far. He therefore made no attempt to strike his captor, but unclasping his cloak, still held in Van Hemsted's tenacious grasp, he burst from it with such force that the latter stumbled backwards some paces, and could not recover his equilibrium till Vrank had gained full twenty yards in advance; and ere another chance of seizure was given to his pursuer, he reached the foot of the wall. A shout of triumph burst from the Hoeks, who fancied him now at the term of his flight, unknowing what he did in the bereavement of fear, and utterly in their power.

But he, well trained in the active sports of the court of Burgundy, planted in the earth the blade of the halberd, which he had seized on for the purpose of aiding his escape in that way, and by a flying bound, borne upwards on the strong and supple pole, he completely cleared the wall, loosened his hold of the weapon as he disappeared over the top; and an immediate splashing sound beyond, told that he had fallen, safely and softly, into the deep moat that flanked the garden outside.

The discomfited Hoeks, almost all heavy Hollanders, unused to this kind of exercise, gazed in open-mouthed astonishment, as a group of pantomine mummers fixes its marvelling eyes on a harlequin leap. But the bloodthirstiness of their nature soon awoke them from their surprise, and they hurried out, by every sortie of the place, to endeavour to recapture him, whom they hoped to find half-drowned at the other side. In this, however, they were again disappointed. Vrank had safely swam across the moat, and swiftly resu-

ming his flight, favoured by the dusk, had already gained a hiding-place of perfect security.

We must not stop in faint efforts to picture Jacqueline's delight at hearing the details of this escape; nor Van Monfoort's self-satisfaction at having been the means of saving him who was his natural enemy, but the chosen friend of his reason; nor Countess Marguerite's rage; nor the fury of Van Hemsted and his associates. The effects of all the various passions excited by the event were, with one exception, soon set aside by the more absorbing circumstance of Philip of Burgundy's near approach to Amersfort, with a large, and it was believed, an irresistible invading force. While the consequent agitation made every minor consideration forgotten, the exception alluded to was furnished by Jacqueline, whose mind seemed susceptible of no new impression after that which had so lately shaken its very frame-work. Day after day immediately following Vrank's memorable visit, the fever which she fought against gained

new ground, till she sunk at last upon a sick-bed, mortified at the degrading connection between moral and physical feeling, and loathing the weakness of nature, which bows down the strongest mind under the influence of the bodily excitement, originally caused by its own. During two or three weeks, consumed in the warlike operations now immediately acting before the walls of Amersfort, Jacqueline lay under the retarding influence of such medical ignorance as the place afforded; sometimes insensible to what passed, at others, acutely alive to events, of which she at times panted to be a sharer, and not unfrequently longed that she might become the victim.

But though Jacqueline could take no personal share in these events, her influence was the grand mover of all. The command of the place was vested in Van Monfoort, Van Hemsted having set out with reinforcements to join his brother, who was the leader of the Hoeks already in junction with the English troops in Zealand. The brave Ludwick of Urk did not

belie his reputation in the trying circumstances of his command. Devotion to his mistress was his main inspiration, and was aided well by inveterate hatred to Philip and his Kabblejaw allies. No attack was at first expected against Amersfort, which it was supposed the duke would have passed by; but his hope of seizing the place by a *coup de main*, and thus obtaining possession of Jacqueline's person, made him resolve on an attempt, which his better judgment ought to have made him avoid.

Europe had not learned in those days the grand secret of defence, which teaches that torn-up and loosely-piled paving stones are better than ramparts of either brick or clay; that garret and cellar windows are as good as embrasures and casemates; and that the best mode of forcing assailants to quit a town is, in the first place, to throw wide the gates for their free entry. It is to be hoped that another century will see the demolition of fortifications altogether, and that the enormous cost of their erection and preservation will be turned to the service of the

people, who now know so well how to make every house a citadel, and every street a place of victory. But though the inhabitants of Amersfort in the fifteenth century did not know the inspiration of the barricades, they had all the valour which, on so many a subsequent occasion, proved Holland to be the classic land of fortified defence, against the most desperate efforts of assault. Leyden, or Haarlem, in the following century, gave no more glorious example of resistance to Spanish tyranny, than Amersfort, on the occasion we treat of, when opposed to the despotic injustice of Philip "the good."

The grand principle of popular right now stood opposed to the pretensions of sovereign wrong; and this effective effort of the Hoeks, under Jacqueline, their chosen sovereign, is a successful instance in the long struggle between the towns of Holland and Flanders against the dukes, counts, and earls, successively invading them from the Gallic territory, a struggle which may be considered as the most perfect type of

the contest between fredom and feudality. We have anticipated in saying that Amersfort was successful. We had not done so, did the interest of our story hinge on the result, but would have gratified the excited curiosity of readers who love to linger on the details of a doubtful event. But our heroine was no actor in the stirring scene; and we must hasten over its description, to reach others in which her fate was still more deeply implicated.

Philip expected that Amersfort would have fallen easily under his attack, and it was made with all the vigour which characterised his warlike operations. The resistance was worthy of the cause defended, and the enemies opposed. No instance on record gives a higher notion of obstinate bravery. The Hollanders of those remote days were on all occasions as prone to die in defence of their domestic privileges, as they were prompt, at later epochs, to prove the value they placed on liberty, lost for a while, but gloriously reconquered, and, in all the after fluctuations of their history, the mainspring of the

national mind. Philip was opposed not only by the common means of resistance in all sieges, and assaults, but by every unusual effort to which determination could resort. The women of Amersfort fought on the walls, invoking the name of their idolized countess, and mingling prayers for her recovery, with imprecations on her enemies. While soldiers were combating, the clergy were supplicating; and while incense was profusely thrown up before the altars, burning oil, heated pitch, and scalding water were showered from the ramparts; so that heaven and earth were equally impressed into the service of the besieged.

The result of their efforts was complete triumph. Philip, after repeated attempts, and being frequently himself exposed to imminent peril, in personal conflicts in the very ditches of the place, was forced to give up the attempt with considerable loss, and to retire from before the walls with his whole army. Having a greater object in view, he probably abandoned this one the more readily; but he

was in no instance a man so headstrong as obstinately to sacrifice his soldiers, and risk his sovereignty; far superior in that respect to his celebrated son, Charles the Rash, who was not born at the epoch of our story, but whose mad career offers a most striking contrast to Philip's long course of success, to which this unimportant check was almost a solitary exception.

This repulse raised the hopes of the Hoeks to an extravagantly sanguine pitch; but they did not measure by a just standard Philip's capability of rising against reverse. He was resolved to wipe away his recent disgrace by an exertion of all his energies; and with skilful enterprise he immediately pushed on his army, to seek a recompence for defeat in the chance of a redeeming victory.

CHAPTER II.

A NEW year had opened, and the morning of St. Poncien's day, the 13th of January, 1426, dawned on the world. The snow now lay thickly on the low shores of Zealand, and every river was frozen from its source to its mouth. Winter had set in severely; and the English troops, cantoned in the Island of Schowen, were exposed to all the rigours of an inclement season, and anxiously waiting the approach of the promised enemy, which was to end their suspense, the worst of all evils to soldiers. The cottages, and fisher-huts of the coast all round

the little town of Brouwershaven were occupied by Lord Fitz-walter's army. He himself had his head quarters in one of the principal houses of this insular capital; and as the scanty habitation of the neighbourhood could contain but a small portion of his followers, rude constructions of wood, cloth, and canvass, were thrown up in the most sheltered vicinity of the seashore, offering but imperfect accommodations to the poor fellows who had to brave the privations of winter, as well as the perils of war.

The most advanced post of the usual nightly bivouac, on the north-easternmost head-land of Brouwershaven, had passed a wretched fourteen hours of cold and darkness in their guard-tent. They consisted of a serjeant, two corporals, and a dozen privates, sturdy Englishmen of Fitz-walter's own regiment of archers. They had passed the night as best they could, relieving, by turns, every half hour the one sentry, who stood on the outmost point of land; and in spite of their most active efforts to keep themselves warm, each in his tour of duty was almost be-

numbed and frozen. Those who occupied the tent were little better off than he who paced the path of beaten snow on the beach ; for although huddled together round the brass chafing-pan of burning sea-coal, which stood in the middle of the tent, or occasionally rolling their cloak-wrapped forms in the straw which lay thick on the ground, still the wind pierced sharply through the canvass in every part, and the earth-damps were forced up, in defiance of even the rush mat which lay beneath the straw.

Of all the party, Serjeant Thorlsby was the individual who had least repose ; for the responsibility of command required his being constantly on the alert, and the veteran who had learned the perils of neglect, in several campaigns under Henry V. in France, was not satisfied with the mere slovenly discharge of his own duty, but saw closely into the performance of that of the rest. His nose was in consequence very nearly frost-bitten, and his eyes in a perpetual flood of tears, from the nipping air, which pinched the one, and made the other

blink, as the serjeant held his face to the open slit of the tent, with short intervals of retreat during many hours of the night.

"Up, corporal, for the relief!" exclaimed he, as the half-hour's chime from Brouwershaven church-steeple rang sharply through the rarified atmosphere.

"Rouse thee, Ralph Grimston!" cried the corporal; "don thy sallet, take up thy arms, and march!"

"A plague on all frosty nights and ill-stitched canvass!" muttered the soldier, as he rose from the straw, "my limbs are as cramped and gnarled with the cold as though I had sat an hour i' th' stocks at St. Magnus' Corner."

"Ah, Ralph, that had done small harm to thy accustomed limbs—they are well used to the measure of the wooden anklet-holes," observed another of the men, whose wit was keenly relished by the rest of the party, as was evinced by a loud laugh, that went far through the walls of the tent.

"Out on thee, for a scapegrace lovel," re-

torted Ralph, nimbly adjusting his head-piece, and making ready his bow and baldrick. "The mark of the beadle's whip on thy back is blushing redder than even this cold night, to hear thee speak ill of thy betters."

The laugh, ready for either side of a coarse jest, now went round at the expense of the first speaker.

"Come, my lads, come!" said the authoritative voice of Serjeant Thorlsby, "'tis no time now for jibes and jeers, when Burgundy is off the coast, and every Briton should keep ill words and hard blows for the common foe. Out with the relief; the sentry strikes his dagger on his brigandine to mark the end of his time of watch."

"Ralph Grimston, out for the relief!" repeated the corporal, and then left the tent with the soldier who was next for duty.

"What chime has just tolled," asked another, rubbing his drowsy eyes, which had been long ineffectually striving to close in sleep.

"'Tis seven o'clock, and the morn is break-

ing over the sea yonder," replied the second corporal, who had stood the last two-hours' watch.

"Let us all up, then, and prepare for the sunrise muster," said Serjeant Thorlsby.

"Up, then, up with the sun, brave boys! as the old catch has it," exclaimed one of the soldiers, a young fellow, who actively rose from the log on which he had laboured for an uneasy doze, and immediately began to sort and choose among the accoutrements of the whole guard those which belonged to himself.

"Ay, this is my hufkyn and mawle," said he, "but here, Robert Moggs, is thy pike; and harkye! Stephen Bracton, thy dagger hangs with Paul Hetherstone's burgonet. Make clear my masters, and each man his own!"

"Thou'rt a brisk and a deft lad, Walter Bassett. I'll warrant thou'lt bear a serjeant's short staff ere the war be over;" exclaimed old Thorlsby in an encouraging tone.

"I bid for a pair of gilt spurs, serjeant, and will not stop for less," said the young man.

"Well done, Walter," shouted one of his comrades with a sneer, "proud words, for a raw boy, who has never seen the flight of shaft or bolt, or heard the sound of saker or falconet, in anger."

"Why, what wouldst thou mean by that mouth-twisting grin, thou particular fellow?" retorted Walter, "may not ambition speak in a boy, because 'tis dumb in thy beard-covered jaws? Were every archer as dull as thee, slow Sefton, Duke Philip's billmen might snatch the bows from our hands and the horns from our belts, ere we could shoot a shaft for the sake of merry England."

"Remember, Walter," said another of the men, "that Sefton began his service in the cross-bow company; and they are all slowgoers in virtue of their base weapon."

"I'll tell ye, comrades, "said Sefton, "for all ye may say against the cross-bow, it is a noble instrument of war, and it will hold its place in old England's ranks long after these long bows of ours are cast into disuse. Shew

me the best among them, that can carry a shaft point-blank to its mark, like a Latch or a Prod, either of steel, horn, or wood, whether pulled by goat's foot or moulinet? What signifies the arrow which we shoot shuffling by chance through the wind, compared to an iron quarrel, a flint-stone, or leaden bullet, sent point-blank from a good cross-bow at an object sixty yards off? No, no, my lads; give me brave Coeur de Lion's good old weapon, and beshrew the day that saw me drafted into the archer's guard!"

"That's a sorry compliment to thy comrades, Sefton," exclaimed a new speaker, "and if thou hadst nothing worse to confess at thy yule-tide shrift, Sir Anthony, the curate had an easy job on it."

"Nay, I meant not my comrades, but my craft," replied Sefton. "I have stood too many a tough pull by thy side, good friend, to cast a reflection of unkindness on thee or thy like."

"Good will, good will and fair words, bro-

thers," exclaimed the serjeant, always on the watch to keep up a cordial tone among his men. "We must not lean hard on Sefton, though he has wielded the weapon which we justly despise, and which caused King Richard the death he so well deserved for so devilish an invention. But, let no man decry the long-bow, which can send three goose-quilled arrows faster and farther than the other can discharge one quarrel, though it be feathered with wood or brass. But if the long-bow beats all other weapons, as, grace be to God! we have proved at Agincourt and elsewhere, yet remember, lads, that the cross-bow is all to nought before the arquebuss for speed or surety."

"Ay, serjeant, you say well," cried Sefton, elated at this tribute paid to his favourite weapon; "I knew a man of our corps, Ralph Mugglesford by name, whose widow now keeps the Cup and Tun anent the White Friar's hospital in Fleet Street, that in the skirmishes before Rouen killed and hurt more Frenchmen with his cross-bow than any six harquebusiers

during the whole siege. And true it is as that I'm a breathing man, our noble King Henry, whom God pardon, whose like we may never look on—"

The forced listeners to this preamble were terrified at the prospect of one of "slow Sefton's" oft-told stories; and young Bassett, tipping the wink to the others of the group, said in his usual pert way—

"I'll tell you what it is, Sefton, as sure as my father's a mercer in East-cheap, and may dog's-wain or hopharlot be my coarse covering for ever, but I know that long story of thine about the kith and kin of the Mugglesfords, as well as my dagger knows my baldrick. Canst not tell us something new, old boy? or give us a trick of the Italian tergitour's mummery, or a morris-dancer's feat in the frosty air? Or shall I give thee in Master Chaucer's rhymes a true picture of a gallant archer? What say ye, comrades? you know, I learned reading at Gaffer Bumford's grammar-school!"

"Thou'rt a pert cockerel, the whole archer's

company knows that," said Sefton, mortified at being cut short in his story, and more so at the merriment excited by the speech of his interrupter.

"Recite, recite!" exclaimed all the others of the party. "The long-bows for ever! Hurra for the jolly archers!" and Bassett thus called on, put himself into a theatrical attitude, and slapping Sefton familiarly on the shoulder, he spouted forth—

"And he was cladde, in cote and hode of grene,
A shefe of peacocke's arwes, bryghte and clene,
Under his belt he bore ful thriftily:
Wel couthe he dresse his takel yewmanly:
His arwes drouped not with fetheres lowe,
And in his hond he bore a mighty bowe.
A not-hed hadde he, with broune visage,
Of wood-craft couth he wel al the usage.
Upon his arme he had a gai bracer,
And by his side a sworde and a bokelir.
And on the other side a gai daggere,
Harneised wel and sharpe as point of spere.
A Christofere on his breste of silken shene,
An horne he bare, the baudrike was of grene."

And there, my brave lads, is the picture of a right joyous and jolly gentleman archer, like my worthy gossip Sefton here, or his true friend

Walter Bassett. Come, give me thy hand, old boy—we're brother-bowmen and true Britons together, in a strange land, and an ugly quarrel—give me thy hand, old Surefoot!"

"Ay, ay, Sefton! no malice!" said Serjeant Thorlsby. "Let's all join hands in a round of brotherhood. Who knows how soon the mounseers and mynheers will come to break our peace!"

"Ay, and our pates," said Bassett with a laugh; and the whole group joined hands and danced round the fire, in a burst of that gloomy gaiety which is, on like occasions, so awful a forerunner to suffering and slaughter.

"Halloa, halloa! Hast seen the ghost?" cried two or three of the party to the corporal, now returned to the tent with the sentry he had relieved, as they put their frost-blown faces in and stared at the mad-cap circle, capering round, while their harness and various weapons clanked an accompaniment to their hoarse voices.

"A ghost!" said the corporal, shivering as he came in; "no, i'troth, but I've seen a signal of what may make ghosts of some of us!"

There was an air of seriousness in these words, which struck with a solemn effect on the lately giddy-seeming group. The rude gambols ceased, and each man listened for the sequel of the corporal's announcement.

"Ay, comrades, ye may stop dancing, and take to praying, for the tar-barrel at Splash-water head is just a-blaze, to tell that the enemy's fleet's coming up the channel."

"Ha, ha!" cried the serjeant, cheering up at the news of the enemy's approach, like an old charger at the trumpet's sound, now then to business, gallant hearts! Turn out to the morning muster—the sun will soon shine forth to see your array. But first let me read you the noble Lord Fitz-walter's orders, which, though each man knows by heart, it is nathless my duty to repeat each morning."

The serjeant, after some preparations, read in sonorous accents the following regimental standing orders—

"Let captain and standing officers of the archers or Longbow's company, see that their

soldiers, according to their draught and strength, have good bows, wel rocked, wel strynged, every strynge whippe in their rocke, and in the myddes rubbed with wax, braser, and shuting-glove; sum spare strynges trymed as aforesaid; everie man one shefe of arrows, with a leather case, gode against rayne, and in the same fower and twentie arrows, whereof eight should be lighte to galle and astryne the enemie with the hailshot of light arrows, before they shall cum within the range of harquebuss shot. Let everie man have a brigandine or cote of plate, a skul or hufkyn, a mawle of led, five foot in length, a pike, the same hangynge by his girdle with a hooke and a dagger. Being thus furnished, let them, by musters, marche, shoote and retyre—keeping their faces upon the enemie. Sum tyme putte them into great nowmbers as to battell apperteyneth, and thus use them often tymes practised till they be perfecte, for those men in battell ne skirmish can not be spared. And so none other weapon may be compaired with the same noble weapon."

"Bear that in mind, Sefton, 'tis the general's own word," said Serjeant Thorlsby, closing his parchment-covered book, in which this order was written as we have given it to our readers, only altered here and there by somewhat modernizing the spelling and omitting a few words now quite obsolete. The well-disciplined archers had listened with the most profound attention to the reading of this document, though they could repeat every word of it, like their pater-noster. When the serjeant had finished, however, the clatter of their preparations for parade instantly re-commenced; but one of them called out:—

"Good serjeant, the sun is not yet above the sea. Let's not put out our noses till we can warm them at his red-hot furnace. And meantime, as we have neither sack nor ale on this comfortless beach to make our blood stir quicker, let's have a bout of a chorus to keep out the cold air. What say ye, gallants?"

"A song, a song!" cried several.

"Come, Bassett," said one, "thou art pitch-

pipe to the company—up with a stave. Thy clear voice is inherited from thy old uncle, the snuffling sub-chanter of St. Mary's Axe. Give us somewhat appropriate, 'Summer is y comynge,' 'Blows the red rose in the brae,' 'Nay my nay, nay my nay,' or some such soft ditty, as thou wert accustomed to warble to little Cicely of the White Hart in Southwark, when ye wandered together in Lord Cobham's park at Charing. Come, lad, chime it up, chime it up! Thou'rt able to chime it up from prick song."

"That may be, Hetherston," replied Bassett, "but ratsbane be my portion if I am able to sing a stance now, that I ever sung to Cicely. No, no, I must not think of her! But we must not be faint-hearted neither, brave boys! By the bones of King Sebba, this is no time for sad thoughts! so I'll give ye a goodly Hunt's up, or Wasfail roundel, to mind ye of dear England, and put new life into your frost-nipped nerves."

"Hearken, hearken! cease clattering and

clinking! Hist for the roundel!" said several voices together, each helping to keep up the clamour that all wanted to stop.

"But, I say, bully Bassett," exclaimed the serjeant, "canst thou not, brave boy, give us one of thy off-hand roundels? something apt and pat—wherewithal to make us laugh in the wind's teeth this chattering morn? Try thy hand at an extempre—rouse up thy ready rhymes!"

"Well, well, I'll do my best," said Bassett, "though i'fegs, comrades, when the heart's full of home and old times, the tongue can scarce run glibly in the frolic of extempre verse. But, I'll give something, for better or worse, to the tune of—let's see—'The hounds are in the brake, boys,'—'Tis a three-man's song—some of ye know the air and must join me as I go on!"

"I know it," said one.

"Ay, ay, lad, we'll chime in," cried another.

"Very well, very well! and now mind ye gossips, let no one be angry with a joke this

morn, which may hear the bell toll for many of us—and now, boys, repeat after me—I'll begin with a chorus."

The young and not over-refined improvisator, after a short pause, and with little hesitation, then sang the following stanzas, duly accompanied by his comrades, who formed the subject of his rude rhymes, their loud bursts of laughter telling at every strophe how resolved they were (and how easy) to be pleased.

"Heigh for a nonny, ho for a nonny!
Madge is in the dale;
And the crispy snow, as her footsteps go
To gather a branch of the misletoe,
Might tell, if it would, a tale!

"The serjeant's nose look'd blue, boys,
Ere chanticleer had crew, boys;
Or the belfry's chime
Had warned old time
How cold the north wind blew, boys.

Chorus.—Heigh for a nonny, &c.

"Jack Sefton's slow and slack, boys,
Bob Moggs is awry in the back, boys,
And Bracton's lips,
When his ale he sips,
Like true lovers' kisses smack, boys.

Chorus.—Heigh for a nonny, &c.

"Paul Hetherston throws his friends, boys,
Like his arms at odds and ends, boys,
And Corporal Crump,
With his head all a-lump,
Has his hose and his ways to mend, boys.

CHORUS.—Heigh for a nonny, &c.

"Ralph Grimstone, who walks the watch, boys,
On his cheek has a frost-bitten blotch, boys,
And, alack's the day!
When I've said my say,
Wat Bassett's at best a botch, boys.

"Heigh for a nonny, ho for a nonny!
Madge is in the dale,
And the crispy snow, as her footsteps go
To gather a branch of the misletoe,
Might tell, if it would, a tale."

"Enough, enough, comrades! by St. George I'm sick of my own foolery! God speed it with poor Cecily this cold morning! mayhap she saw a winding-sheet in the candle last night, or dreams of a bloody field this minute. Serjeant, I can sing no more,—I had rather make ready for fighting."

"Out then, lads! out on the beach for parade! the sun is up, and 'fore Heaven! there sounds the morning falconet."

At these words the party hurried from the tent. Young Bassett stopped for a moment or

two beside slow Sefton, who was sure to linger after the rest.

"Tell me, Sefton," said the former, "what is your periapt made of?"

"Why of what, if there's truth in wizard, refreshes the heart and corroborates the whole body, as well as keeps off harms either of steel or lead. It's made of pounded Bezoar's stone and the confection of Alkermes."

"And mine," said Bassett, "is pure St. John's-wort, picked by Cecily's own fingers, on a Friday, in full moon last July, that was in the hour of Jupiter, when it came into effectual operation. Mother Maxton, of St. George's Fields, vouched, that of all amulets it most drives away fantastical spirits. Yet I don't know how it is, but something hangs on my heart, Sefton!"

"Tut, tut! the trumpet's flourish and the cannon's roar will drive that away, Walter!"

"I hope so! But at any rate, I'll keep up a good countenance," said Bassett, leaving the tent with his comrade.

CHAPTER III.

Before the sun had fairly shewn his blood-red disk through the thick haze that hung over the horizon, not only the little circle of the advanced postguard, but Lord Fitz-walter himself, and great part of his army were out of their quarters, and mustering in all speed to oppose the enemy, whose coming was announced by a chain of watch-fires, now blazing along the coast. Drums and trumpets sounded the gay reveillé through the narrow streets of Brower-shaven, and down the lines of cantonment, occupied by the English and their ready allies the

Hoeks. Nobody was taken by surprise. The approach of the Burgundian forces had been long expected and longed for, by troops tired of inaction, and impatient to follow up the glorious example set by the people of Amersfort. Within an hour, therefore, of the first alarm, full ten thousand warriors, well prepared and ardent for the shock, were formed in battle-array in the raw mists of this memorable morning.

The picture presented by the troops, as they occupied their various stations in the field, where every platoon knew its place, and every squadron had already practised its manœuvres, was composed of many animating, yet melancholy combinations. The frosty and snow-covered earth does not offer the natural complexion of a battle-field. Winter is not the fitting season for war. The green-sward on a spring day seems the appropriate stage for the conflicts of armies. The mind sympathizes freely in the stirring excitement of a contest in such a scene, when valour rises gaily in the young heart, as the lark mounts singing to Heaven's vault.

But a chill creeps over the mind, which imagines the crash of battalions on a cold and cheerless plain, where the hard earth repulses the tread of men and the tramp of horses, and the snow lies in ready heaps, to form winding-sheets for the gallant victims, whose blood is to discolour its wreaths. A fight on such a stage tells that ambition has no repose, and that tyranny refuses a respite even to the decaying elements of nature. All is out of place, forced and disfiguring; and the heart sickens at the scene.

But the generous Fitz-walter and his followers had no room for notions like this. Battle was their element, and it never came out of place. They now felt themselves standing up, the champions of suffering right, in the person of a brave and beautiful woman; and all seasons were alike, which allowed them to quench their hot valour in the troubled waters of war. The Hoeks, on their parts, would, if possible, have reversed the whole order of nature, and have turned winter to summer, and night to day, and found all good, if they could be so brought

into closer and more frequent contact with their detested enemies. The spirit of the little allied army may be therefore understood.

The order of battle was, according to the well-considered plan of the experienced Fitz-walter, formed in lines. The first being arranged close to the beach, was composed of the English troops; a post which they have always been sure to occupy in every continental contest, whether in north or south, in the swamps of Holland, or on the hills of Spain, from the battle of Browershaven, to that of Waterloo. The appearance of the English battalions stretching along the sea-shore, was infinitely more striking than could be imagined now, from the observance of a modern brigade, in its more regular, but far less picturesque attire and equipment. The most remarkable were the archer's companies, in all about one thousand men, part of the very *élite* of the English military force. Geoffry Chaucer's lines, quoted in the last chapter, give a lively picture of an individual soldier of this celebrated corps.

Several hundreds so accoutred, such parts of their body as were not covered by their shirt of mail, decked in a close-fitting suit of green, with shining arms and martial air, must have formed a most imposing spectacle. The archers were not only picked men for good conduct and fine appearance, but were of a better order of beings than those composing the ordinary bulk of the army. They were none of the depraved class of "masterlesse menne," or "roystering swash-bucklers," but chiefly citizens of London, sons of people of substance and good connections, for it required both money and interest to procure admission into a branch of the service, forming so capital a provision for a soldier.

The privates of this corps were indeed apparently overpaid. They had sixpence a day, besides rations when on service, a sum fully equal to five shillings at the present times. And it may be supposed that this high rate of income ensured a correspondent tone and spirit, which rendered the English archers a body of the finest troops in Europe.

Besides these, there were now drawn out for action, bill-men, pike-men, and lancers, or men-at-arms, which last were fenced in complete steel from head to foot, and being of the strongest and largest men, were considered the most important portion of the army. Several pieces of cannon were attached to Lord Fitz-walter's force, of various denominations; some of the unwieldy size common to those early days of artillery service, others of more moderate proportions; from such large pieces as that Flemish gun described by Froissart, and those of later date by Monstrelet, the first of which made such a noise on being discharged, "that one would have thought that all the devils in hell had a share in it," down to the light culverins, each carried by two men, and fired off from a rest planted in the ground, a kind of diminutive field-piece, or overgrown blunderbuss.

Fitz-walter had little or no cavalry with him on this occasion. The Hoeks, of whom Van Hemsted had the chief command, were not quite deficient in this important army, some squadrons

of which flanked the second line of the army composed of the good men of Holland and Zealand. The reserve did not consist of the best troops, as a different system of tactics would prudently point out, (for Fitz-walter's wish to follow such was frustrated by the forward emulation of the combatants,) but of fishermen and peasants quite undisciplined and indifferently armed. But altogether, the mass skilfully drawn up, and anxious to engage, with their various standards unfurled, and their warlike instruments sounding, shewed a formidable array to receive the far more numerous foe, who now prepared to make a long day's work of havoc.

The squadrons of various kinds of craft, containing Duke Philip's army, came rapidly in sight, each ship or boat successively anchoring in a close offing, and soon disgorging its living cargo of fighting men. The advanced guard consisted of the Dutch and Zealand contingents of United Kabblejaws, led on by Floris Van Borselen. The flat-bottomed open boats, in which they were embarked, were pulled by the

sturdy rowers close up towards the shore, indifferent to the heavy stone bullets discharged at them from the hostile pieces of ordnance planted on the flanks of the British line. As the assailants took to the smaller boats attached to the transport vessels, and came paddling on in the shallow water, a shower, or, (in the words of Lord Fitz-walter's order of the day,) "a hail-shot of light arrows" was poured upon them from a thousand strings, that twanged at the given word in simultaneous discharge.

The attacking party was not slack in returning this and the succeeding volleys, from arquebuss, cross-bow, and long-bow, while the large vessels, moored behind, to cover the landing, sent their missiles from the huge Flemish pieces before alluded to, in as rapid succession as was compatible with the then imperfect state of the science of gunnery.

In the very foremost of the Kabblejaw boats two figures were remarkable, the one for manly and youthful beauty, with an air of intrepid decision; the other for a wildly terrible ap-

pearance, in dress, gesture, and accoutrement. The first was clad in the light blue costume of the Eversdyke fiefs, with a silver placquet bound on the arm, the red cross of St. Andrew embroidered on his breast, a drawn rapier in his right hand, and the green banner of the Borselens in his left. The second, whose wolf-skin short mantle concealed neither limbs nor body, was armed with the tremendous weapon, which had made the Zevenvolden ring, with the sound of the orox's death-blow. We need scarcely specify the names of Vrank and Oost to the reader, whose memory can go back to that early scene.

Lord Fitz-walter, who rode along the English line, encouraging his men by all the inducements dear to soldiers, soon distinguished Vrank, as he came closer in towards land, and sprang from his boat knee-deep in the sea, forming his father's vassals into order of attack.

" Brave followers !" cried the English general, " as ye value my fame and honour, spare that knight in the silver-trimmed blue mandilon,

who carries the green flag. I have marked him for my own prey—he bears my glove in his cap !"

This appeal to their keen sense of chivalry was a sacred panoply for Vrank's safety. Volley after volley was discharged by the English archers, and many a barb found a sheath in Kabblejaw hearts ; but all seemed to fly wide of the young warrior, who stood first and foremost in the fight. Floris Van Borselen was not far behind his son. He jumped into the sea, with all the energy, if not quite the activity of youth, as soon as his boat touched the ground, and he hurried forwards, as near as possible to the front of the line.

" On, Kabblejaws ! On, men of Eversdyck !" shouted he, and successive words of encouragement burst from him, scarcely audible amid the roar of the cannon, the splash of the mailed-men in the surf, and the various war-cries of the different communes composing the Kabblejaw contingents. An irregular line, two or three deep, was soon formed, and a charge ere

long took place at Van Borselen's command, the assailants driving before them a froth-crested wave, which rolled far up the strand, and into the very lines of the English archers. These, as soon as the hostile movement commenced, practised the manœuvre then so peculiarly their own, of letting the front rank drop down on one knee, behind the high stakes, as a rest for better aim-taking. The centre rank stood still, and the rear-rank men, each stepping a pace to the right, they all at once pulled their bow-strings, furnished with the heaviest peacock-feathered shafts; and while those most behind shot through the intervals of those immediately before them, both flights of arrows passed clear over the heads of the front rank, and the combined volley formed a cloud of winged weapons, and threw a deep shadow on the sea as it went whizzingly along.

Many a bold Kabblejaw sunk into the waves from the effect of this terrible discharge, which was repeated again and again before the advancing line of pikemen could gain the dry land.

They were galled, stunned, and almost stupified by these reiterated assaults. But the unflinching valour of the Borselens, and the other leading Kabblejaws who escaped unhurt, preserved their followers from faltering, and the Flemish lancers, who formed the second line of attack, now taking to their boats, gave new courage to the advanced guard, which might well have wavered without any imputation, under the fearful effects of such a reception.

"They fly, they fly!" halloed Floris Van Borselen, already hoarse from vociferating to his troops; "those proud English, those famous archers fly before us!"

A loud cheer answered the fallacious information of the deceived chieftain; and he and his men rushed on to the fatal space left clear by the retreating English, who purposely fell back, taking good care, however, according to the commands already quoted, to "marche, shoote, and retyre—keepynge their faces on the enemie." As soon as the Kabblejaws came on shore, in all the confusion of delusive success,

the flanks of the English line fell back at right angles with the centre of the line which stood still, and at that moment the cavalry of the Hoeks, which had already practised the manœuvre, charged fiercely on each side of their disorderly foes, while the archers contrived to pour in unsparingly their cloth-yard shafts. But far from causing a panic among the Kabblejaws, the sight of their hated countrymen inflamed them to desperation.

"Grace to St. Poncien, this blessed day! St. Peter and St. Paul be praised!" cried old Borselen; "they come, they come! Now, brave Kabblejaws, as you love your native land, as ye hate the Hoeks, be firm and bold! Up lances! ready cross-bows!—steady gunsmen!—face right and left!—form two squares back to back!—Leave the English unharmed, and turn every eye, every hand, and every weapon against the odious Hoeks!"

These orders were quickly obeyed, with an attention to discipline, not common in the conflicts of civil war. The two Borselens stood

together in the centre of the right hand square. Uterken commanded the other. The hostile squadrons which galloped on to the attack, were respectively headed by the Van Hemsted brothers. Zheger, the eldest, and the chief in command, soon broke the square, scarcely formed in time to resist his impetuous charge. The ill-fated Kabblejaws composing it were cut down without mercy, or driven back into the sea, where some few were rescued by the advancing Flemish line. The assailants of the right-hand square were not so fortunate. At the very first onset, young Hemsted, who rode furiously forward on recognising Vrank Van Borselen, was slain by a random shot from an arquebuss, before he could reach the object that so particularly inflamed his fury. His squadron, seeing their leader fall, hesitated, which is tantamount in such a case to repulse; and being fired on skilfully from some of the boats, which covered the landing of the Kabblejaws, they broke and fled. Floris Van Borselen promptly took advantage of this circumstance, and advancing his

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troops in a close column, he gained possession of a rudely entrenched church-yard, close to Browershaven, before any effectual opposition could be made by the English, who were now fully engaged with the Flemish reinforcements.

The infantry of the Hoeks, however, began an almost immediate movement, in order to surround Van Borselen in his position ; and just then one of those instances occurred, so unheard of in modern conflicts, but common to the wars of chivalry. Lord Fitz-walter, who had marked every movement that had taken place from the commencement of the action, now quitted the station which seemed peculiarly his own, and leaving the English troops under the command of the knight next in rank to himself, he rode towards Van Borselen's position, accompanied only by one of his squires, and a soldier who held a white flag at the end of his lance.

At this signal of truce, the Kabblejaws stood firm, but ceased every hostile discharge ; while old Floris grimly smiled at those around him, and mocked at the notion of the English general

coming forward with a summons for surrender. But Vrank took a keener and more correct view of Fitz-walter's motives; and he requested his father's leave to advance and enter on the parley. The permission granted, Vrank stepped forward, and was quickly accosted by the haughty lord.

"Sir Knight," said he, "we know each other; and having a private quarrel to settle, I propose for awhile a truce on this isolated part of the battle-field, to allow of its adjustment."

"What does he say?" asked Floris, who did not understand the French language, in which Fitz-walter spoke.

"He proposed that he and I should fight in single combat, hand to hand," said Vrank.

"So, so! By St. Peter, and St. Paul, then, thou shalt do it! A Borselen never yet received a challenge that was not accepted, nor often fought a battle that was not won. Thou must teach this insolent Englishman, Vrank, of what stuff a Zealander and a Kabblejaw is made!"

"What are the words of the old knight?" demanded Fitz-walter, who was totally unacquainted with Dutch.

"My father says," replied Vrank, "that he is proud to see a Zealand gentleman measure weapons with an English lord."

"Sir Knight, I honour you for your courtesy," exclaimed the Englishman, bowing to Heer Borselen.

"What does the cringing Saxon mutter about, and mean by saluting me?" inquired the latter of his son.

"Nothing, nothing, Sir! but the usual forms of civilised chivalry," said Vrank, dissatisfied at his father's coarseness.

"So! so! and 'tis such popinjay tricks that I despise and hate," returned Floris; but Vrank put an end to all ill-timed sarcasms, by advancing close to Fitz-walter, and fixing himself in an attitude of defence. His antagonist lost no time in dismounting from his horse, which he gave to the keeping of his attendant,

and in a moment more the hostile rapiers were crossed; while the anxious, but tried Kabblejaws, who looked on, were not sorry to gain this respite from their fatigues.

"One question, my Lord Fitz-walter," said Vrank, "for I know you now as well by name as person. I ask you, on the faith and by the courtesy of knighthood, whose favour is that you bear in your casque, and which I have sworn to dye in your heart's blood?"

"In courtesy I answer, it is that of your liege sovereign, the Countess Jacqueline of Holland and Hainault, whose cause I am here in arms to maintain, against you and all other false traitors to her right and virtues."

"What does he say now?" anxiously asked old Floris, who stood close to his son. But Frank would not repeat the real phrase, and had no heart to invent another. "God! am I then opposed to her chosen knight—to her lover? He could not violate the truth of chivalry and tell a lie—and she, in default and defiance of honour, has done so! Why is not

my arm strengthened instead of palsied? I cannot fight against her champion here, any more than against herself at Amersfort," thought Vrank, while he stood for a moment inactive. But the rapid cut and thrust movements of Fitz-walter rousing his natural courage, drove all sentimental subtleties from his mind, and he soon recovered the consciousness of the part he played, and of the observers before whom he acted. Few men understood the management of his weapons better than Vrank; none had more self-command. So that Fitz-walter, with all his valour and skill and inspiration of a glorious cause, had nevertheless now found his match. It was indeed evident even to himself, that had Vrank been vindictively inclined, he might more than once have taken him at advantage; and Fitz-walter's fury was considerably appeased by the conviction. The contest, therefore, after the few opening passages, became less a passionate struggle than a brisk display of science. Yet a couple of slight wounds were exchanged. Fitz-

walter being hurt in the cheek, and Vrank having received his adversary's point in the thigh. Both bled; and the natural taint of savagery which lurks below the best disposition, was rising high in both the champions at sight of their own blood, and symptoms were shewn by each of increasing violence, which would infallibly have given a more desperate character to their contest. But just then an English officer came galloping at full speed across the plain that intervened between the church-yard and the beach, where the battle was now raging more fiercely than before.

"Lord Fitz-walter! General! cease fighting. Sheathe your rapier, and retire!" cried he; and while the fiery combatants turned round at the sound of this unwelcome summons, these disappointing words fell on his ear.

"Cease fighting, in recordance with your knightly pledge. Duke Philip himself is in sight, and about to take the field."

"Cursed and ill-starred duke!" exclaimed Fitz-walter, dashing his weapon on the earth;

" ever a moment too soon to rob me of my revenge and thwart my glory! 'Twas thus in the battle of Bauge he made me captive, and wrung as the hard condition of my freedom the pledge that I should never fight again where he was in person in the field. Let this explanation suffice, Sir Francon, for my abandonment of this contest, which, with the grace of my Lord St. George, I shall be on the first opportunity proud and happy to renew."

" Why, what is all this, Vrank?—explain it—and quick, my boy—your wound bleeds freely," said the father, who was well pleased at the short explanation given him in reply, and at seeing his son's dangerous antagonist mount his horse. After an exchange of some courteous words on the subject of their mutual hurt, Fitz-walter rode slowly from the scene of action, accompanied by his squire, until he reached a rather elevated portion of ground, whence he could witness, without mixing in, the continuance of the fight. He despatched the officer back to Van Hemsted, with information of

his having abandoned the command, which now devolved on that brave but inexperienced Zealander, who was thus left to cope against the military talent of Philip and his generals, forming a phalanx of fearful odds against the cause of Jacqueline, and the devoted thousands now doomed to participate in its fate.

The low-decked carrack which bore the Duke of Burgundy and his splendid suite had now been rowed close in towards the shore; and the hostile shot discharged from it, justified the report made by the English captain of Philip's actual share in the action. But such a distant co-operation did not suit his temperament. Excited by the scene, and anxious to strike some blow to decide the battle, which, up to that moment, was still very doubtful, the duke was in the act of proclaiming to those around him his resolution to betake himself to the shore, when a somewhat appalling apparition presented itself, clambering up the side of the vessel. It was Oost the dyke-digger who, accustomed to the rough waves of the Friesland coasts, and indif-

ferent to peril or hardship, whether by land or water, had volunteered to swim to Philip's vessel, with a pressing request for assistance from Floris Van Borselen, who, on Fitz-walter's retreat, was threatened with imminent risk from the whole second line of the allied army composed of the Zealand Hoeks, advancing against him in overwhelming numbers, and threatening to cut him off from all chance of escape.

Cost had come on his mission entirely unarmed but with his hunting-knife, which was stuck in his girdle; but when he rose from the sea, his wolf-skin mantle dripping, and his huge limbs and body drenched, he looked an awful specimen of amphibious ferocity. The very sailors who had marked him, as he swam towards the vessel, and to whom he shouted his name and business as he neared it, shrank back as he gained the decks and made way for his approach to the official personages of the duke's suite. His demand to speak with Philip in person was peremptory; and there was something not to be resisted in the wild sin-

gularity of the ambassador, which would have secured him an audience even at a time and station of more formality.

As Oost advanced, his lynx-eyed glance soon selected him who was the sovereign, amid the numerous band of courtiers by whom he was encircled. But the free Trison at the same time distinguished another person, whom he at once recollected, although clad in a different guise from that in which he had once before seen him. This was a rather corpulent individual, looking painfully nervous and very blue, from the united effect of the frost and the firing, in a curious mixture of clerical and warlike habiliment, a cuirass on his breast, casque on head, yet a richly worked mantle of purple silk over his shoulders, of the pattern of a priest's vestment, a crosier in one hand, and a beautifully ornamented and gold-clasped breviary in the other. Oost at once recognised this type of the church militant as the person who had wheedled and overpersuaded him to resign his orox-horn in the Zevenvolden, and

whom our readers will not refuse to acknowledge as Bishop Zweder Van Culembourg, although the chapter of Utrecht had some weeks before despoiled him of that title, and driven him out to deprecate the wrath and implore the forgiveness of the Duke of Burgundy.

We must not now pause to trace the windings of selfishness, meanness, and poltroonery, which had for some weeks previously influenced Zweder Van Culembourg. Pressed by his own fears and doubts on the one hand, and by the hostility of Rudolf Van Diepenholt's friends in the chapter and city of Utrecht on the other, he had been, from the very first day we introduced him to our readers, playing the double game so natural to such a mind. It has been seen how he stood neutral even during the successes of Jacqueline and the Hoeks; his influence thrown boldly into the scale might have produced decisive results in their favour and in his own. But the temporizing cunning of his nature would never allow of his making up his mind. When, however, his domestic dis-

putes took a direct tendency unfavourable to himself, he did not hesitate to abandon others; and it was then he wrote to Philip the letter which told him the secrets of the Zevenvolden conference, as far as Jacqueline and Glocester were implicated, but threw the excuse of double perfidy on the part he had himself acted, representing it as assumed for the purpose of ensnaring his associates, and handing them over to Philip's vengeance. Even after this he strictly allowed himself the reservation of actually joining Philip only in case of his evident preponderance of power; and it was not finally until he heard of Glocester's marriage and his abandonment of Jacqueline, and that the people of Utrecht drove him from his archiepiscopal seat, that he sought the head-quarters of the invading, and as something whispered him, the invincible usurper. The rarely-failing acuteness of the sordid was in this instance unfortunately confirmed. The battle now fighting was desperately decisive of the conflict; and we hasten to tell its lamentable result.

When Oost, admitted close to Philip, uttered in brief phrase some sentences expressive of Van Borselen's perilous situation, and his demand for succour, the duke, not versed in the low German idiom, in which the envoy spoke, turned for information to Zweder Van Culembourg; and when the latter translated the message, his teeth chattering the while under the double influence before alluded to, Philip cast a look full of meaning on another person who stood as close to him on one side, as Zweder did on the other. This individual was William Le Begue, whose cool and calculating head furnished him with reasoning sufficient to supply any constitutional defect in courage. He had therefore stood unflinchingly close to Philip in more than one perilious situation during the short campaign; and he was beside him now, to take advantage of whatever might turn up for his own purposes, while ostensibly the disinterested counsellor of his sovereign. Bishops and ministers of our times have happily a dispensation from such hazardous

service, not being called on to pray for, or confer with their liege lord in the very battle field. But such was the habit of the days of yore.

To the expressive look cast by Philip on William Le Begue, the latter replied by a shrug of the shoulders, and a negative shake of the head, which spoke, unfortunately for him, a plain refusal to Borselen's demand. Philip in his turn looked a remonstrance; and after a few words of consultation with his minister he hastened to the vessel's landward side, and left the latter to explain, through Zweder's interpretation, the reply which Oost was to carry back. Zweder accordingly translated it to him, as literally as his state of feeling allowed, but its import was plain—that there were no reinforcements to spare, and that the Borselens were to defend their position to the last.

"And this is the answer to my noble chieftain, Floris of Eversdyke—to the husband of Bona of Bolstock, the fair flower of Friesland nobleness! and so he and his son, the bright-

haired youth of the valley of Ulst, who has suckled the dam of my own child, they are both—father and son—doomed to perish, sacrificed by the lordly wielder of ten thousand spears!"

"My very good, and most considerably gentle friend, my worthy Oost, allow me to go down below to pray for the bodies of the warriors who still fight, and the souls of those who have fallen or may fall; these stone bullets which sing so unmelodiously through the air are marvellously discomforting. Do, worthy, amiable Oost, loosen thy hold of my mantle, and betake thee once more to the waters!"

As Zweder thus imploringly addressed the dyke-digger, he vainly strove to disengage himself from his grasp. When he ceased speaking, the latter looked at him with a savage scowl, but which was a glance of pure kindness compared to what Oost *could* dart from his terrible eyes.

"As for thee, poor frightened wretch," said he, "who tremblest in my grasp as the leveret

under the paw of the hound, or the sheep in the eagle's fangs, thou hast nought to fear from my revenge. Thou art the mere tongue that speaks the word of doom to the brave."

"Thank you, thank you, kind fellow—pray let me retire!" muttered Zweder, with wriggling efforts to escape towards the descent to the ship-cabin; but Oost gave his arm a squeeze, which told him his time of escape was not yet come.

"Silence thy babbling voice, and speak only in answer at my bidding," growled he, close into Zweder's ear; "and tell me, in short phrase, who is he, yon white-headed, pale-cheeked, cold-hearted old man, who has sounded like the raven's voice the death-sentence of the brave."

"Oh! that, my sweet friend, is William le Begue, Lord of Ligny, chief governor to John, Duke of Brabant, and Prime Minister to his Highness, the Puissant Philip, Duke of Burgundy—may I now retire to prayer, good Oost?"

"Away with ye!" said Oost, disdainfully

loosening his hold. "Thou art safe—but by the gods of Friesland, and the saints of her altars, you, William Le Begue, and your master, Philip, shall pay dear for the harm that falls on him you have forsaken!"

With these words the dyke-digger strode along the deck, no one having had leisure to observe the *tête-à-tête* between him and the ex-bishop. As he passed by William Le Begue, he stopped for a moment full before him, and gazed just long enough to take the full measure of his figure and features, so as that time or change could never deface their impress stamped deep on his memory. He, whom he observed was too wily and practised, to shew any sign of discomposure at this scrutiny, but he felt its meaning in his very heart. In a moment more, Oost had swung down from a rope at the ship's prow; and by swimming and wading, soon reached the shore, where a communication was still kept open with the churchyard. William Le Begue watched him awhile, with silent hopes that some chance-shot might

catch him between wind and water ; while Zweder Van Culembourg, peeping from the cabin-window, put up audible prayers that some hungry wave might swallow this very disagreeable addition to his acquaintance. But Oost safely reached the church-yard, just in time to deliver his discouraging answer to Floris Van Borselen, and to bear his share in a desperate shock which instantly took place, by the concentrated body of the Hoeks, advancing to the charge on the Kabblejaw position.

CHAPTER IV.

"No, by St. Andrew! nothing shall prevent me," said Duke Philip, to the group of courtiers, who would have dissuadéd him from quitting the vessel, some, from anxiety for his safety, others from the adulatory pretence of that feeling, and a few, perhaps, from regard to their own. "Let Sir Florival be lowered into the sea! What!—does any one counsel me to hang back at such a time as this? Such a one can be no friend to the glory of my house and name. Shall I suffer audacious Glocester to triumph in the persons of yonder warriors?

or shall they be destroyed but under the chastisement of mine own hand? Shall I not efface the shame of Amersfort, and crush at once both invading English and revolted Dutch? Let no man oppose me more—who loves me, follows me!"

With these words he grasped the standard of Burgundy, which stood prominent on the deck; and descending the vessel's side, he mounted the favourite horse, already known to our readers, which stood girth-deep in the water, docile from fright at the unusual scene, but seemingly re-assured as soon as his princely rider assumed his accustomed seat, and took the bridle into his hand. The horses belonging to the various knights, as well as to the whole body of cavalry composing the expedition, were disembarked from the transports with the greatest possible speed; and several hundred cavaliers were shortly in their saddles and ready for the charge.

Philip, in the mean time, had advanced with a group of chosen knights, somewhat indis-

creetly to the beach; and rallying the broken Kabblejaws, chiefly the men of Delft and Dordrecht, he attacked Van Hemsted, while the Flemings, in large numbers, were busily employed with the English archers, and the other troops of that nation. These now fought purely on the defensive, being greatly outnumbered by their enemies, and somewhat disheartened by Lord Fitz-walter's retreat from the field. Philip soon cleared the passage through the opposing Hoeks, but not without the loss of a Montmorency, a La Laing, a De Brimeau, and other officers of name and note. He soon reached the English line, hurried impetuously on, and had there nearly terminated his mortal career, for a skilful manœuvre on the part of Fitz-walter's successor completely led Philip and his chosen followers, into the same scrape through which the Van Borselens had previously cut their way. The duke found himself suddenly surrounded, and nothing seemed left him but to sell his life as dearly as he could.

In this extremity, the man who some years

before had saved him from a similar danger at the battle of Mons, now hastened to his rescue at the head of a body of men-at-arms, mixed of all the combined provinces, Burgundy, Artois, Picardy, Flanders, Brabant, and Holland. Each vied with the other in following up the example of their redoubted leader, John Vilain, the brave man of Ghent, to whom Philip had proved his special confidence at Hesdin, as will be remembered. This champion broke irresistibly through the English line. At every blow of his battle-axe he struck down an enemy, and his terrible words, following every blow, are recorded by abundant chroniclers and historians of this celebrated fight.

"Kill, kill them!" cried John Vilain, as the English archers, whose arrows being all expended were now reduced to their pikes and swords, fell right and left about him. "Kill them, ye who follow me, I will strike down enough to employ ye all!"

Among those who were particularly active in following up this ferocious order was observed

Spalatro, the master-at-arms, who had closely attended his patron, Duke Philip, to the war, and who now shewed particular skill in poniarding and cutting the throats of the stunned and wounded English. But this bravo's career was ended at this very climax of his glory. A dying man, sinking under his butchery, convulsively gave him a mortal wound, while himself in the very gasp of death, and both were trampled into eternity, under the undistinguishing hoofs of John Vilain's victorious followers.

The English never recovered this shock. The duke, when once extricated from his perilous situation, soon brought all his science to bear upon the various features of the battle; but it was still hard-fought and doubtful, until an unlooked-for co-operation from another quarter ensured the victory to the bad cause, and by the instrumentality of perhaps the best man, whose destiny led him to give it his aid.

The combined attack of the Hoeks on Floris Van Borselen's division, was long continued and unflinchingly withstood. The old chieftain,

rendered desperate by Oost's communication, exerted himself beyond all example to keep the fury of his men at the highest pitch; but he never suffered them or himself to be so far led away as to advance out of the strong position which was their great security against the numbers that assailed them. Every grave-stone and mound of the little enclosure formed a rampart of defence, and many a Kabblejaw fell on the spot under which his father's bones lay mouldering.

The men of Eversdyke were conspicuous for their valour, under the command of their two chieftains; but at length they had but one to fight for, and the other to revenge. Floris Van Borselen fell pierced with wounds, and as Oost stood over his body, a rude shield held before it while his own was uncovered, and the huge tourquois raised in menace to the foe, the dying chieftain had just time and strength to seize his son's hand, and to utter a few broken sentences of farewell.

"So! so!" cried he convulsively, "I have

caught it at last! 'Vrank, my boy, I am going to join our ancestors in Heaven's glory—praise to St. Peter and St. Paul. Thy mother, Vrank, tell the good Vrowe I died like a Zealand gentleman, and a brave Kabblejaw—make the best of your way to Eversdyke, my boy—put the castle in order—scour the guns—tell Duke Philip I never flinched, even when he forsook me—and the Hoeks, Vrank! Oh! the damned Hoeks! never forgive them, Vrank—never, as you hope for pardon in heaven—never! and as for Jacqueline—Jezabel let me call her—as for her, 'Vrank, if you value my dying blessing—if you dread my curse—as for her, never—never—oh, oh!—Ha! So! so!—"

"Thank Heaven he has not finished the sentence!" was the first thought that found utterance from Vrank Van Borselen, as his father's ghastly corpse sank on his supporting arm. We know not if this was filial etiquette, but we believe it to have been true to nature. It was, however, as brief in its duration as quick in its coming. The first fearful shudder over, lest

the sacred words of the dying man had been a terrible command never to think of her whom he had quite resolved never to see, Vrank's whole mind fixed on the loss he had sustained.

"Oh, my noble sire!" exclaimed he, bitterly wringing his hands, "and are you gone indeed for ever? Pattern of high feeling and heroic courage, what must I do to prove myself your son? Revenge, revenge your death! Ay, revenge! revenge!"

The terrible word, thus terribly spoken, found echoes from every throat. Oost stooped to the earth and raised the bloody body in his arms. The Kabblejaws who gazed on it were nearly maddened by the sight. Frantic for vengeance, they called on Vrank to lead them on. He, inflamed like the rest, forgot his stiffened limbs and his weakened state from loss of blood, and casting one look more on the corpse, he put himself at the head of his men, and the whole line was in a few minutes clear beyond the church-yard dyke, and charging full upon the astonished enemy. As they hurried irresistibly

on nothing could effectually oppose the torrent. Van Hemsted, the general of the Hoeks, sunk to the earth, and was trampled over by those who had not time to stop and end the pains of the wounded. The routed Hoeks fell back confusedly on the English line. This alone was wanting to complete the ruin of the latter. Philip, aided by Vilain and the other chiefs, now pressed on them at every other side of their position; and the militia of Veere and Zirikzee, which had as yet taken no share in the action, abandoned their neutrality to aid the winning cause.

A perfect butchery finished the honours of the day. The Hoeks, seeing every chance lost, and knowing they had no mercy to expect, fled towards the sea, and many escaped to the neighbouring islands. The English scorned to yield or fly, and were almost to a man destroyed. Only two hundred remained alive at night, of the gallant little army of the morning, and these being nearly all wounded were all made prisoners.

Lord Fitz-walter, seeing the fate of the day, and conscious that his own forced abandonment of his troops was the main cause of their defeat, cursed in his heart the tyrant sense of honour that made him withdraw from his command. He was, more than once, on the point of rushing into the mêlée, unarmed as he was, and dying, a victim to the creed of chivalry. But his faithful squire restrained him from this step, by representing that were his body found among the slain, nothing could ever clear his memory from the reproach of having broken his knightly vow. This reasoning alone prevailed; and he suffered himself to be passively led to a boat that waited on the beach, in which he and his confident put out to sea; and they were soon lost to sight, in the haze of floating smoke and atmospheric mist that hung on it close to shore.

It was not till he had penetrated deep among the Hoeks, and saw them utterly defeated, that Vrank, or, as he is now entitled to be called, Heer Borselen, had time or thought to pause and look round for his devoted follower, foster-

father, and friend, poor Oost, whom he had not seen since the moment he burst, at the head of his furious followers, from the precincts of the fatal burying ground.

"And he too has fallen!" exclaimed Vrank, "true to the vow I have a hundred times heard him utter, to perish either in saving or revenging the head of the house of Eversdyke. Well, well! Peace to thee, rough and faithful vassal, intrepid warrior, and incorruptible man! Many a peer and prince might envy thy half savage nobleness of mind.—Peace to thee!"

The natural association of thought turned Vrank's eyes towards the church-yard, where his father's unburied body yet lay; and as he looked, he felt a throb of joy at observing his prematurely mourned foster-father, standing in an attitude of respectful sorrow over the corpse of his fallen chieftain. His shield and turquois lay on the ground; and, with hands clasped and head bent, he gave a picture of as solemn anguish as uncivilized man may be supposed to writhe under. But after a short time

thus spent, as if in some deep mental prayer, he knelt down, suddenly raised the body in his arms and hugged it with terrible fervour, then laid it down again, sprang on his feet, seized his club and shield, danced, jumped, and with most frantic gestures of mingled grief and rage, performed some long-since forgotten rite of his country, in which pageanties were blended with the imperfect forms of Christian usage. There was something so fiercely agonizing in Oost's bearing as to overcome the effect of its preposterous absurdity. Not a man that gazed on him laughed or felt inclined to laugh. All, on the contrary, shuddered at the savage exhibition; and they turned away gladly from its painful observance, to resume the work of slaughter which had for a few minutes been suspended.

As soon as Vrank formed a junction with Philip and the troops whom he headed, and the victory was decided, the duke acknowledged, in presence of all the leaders, and in terms of unbounded praise, his obligations to the young chieftain of Eversdyke, to whose gallant and

decisive movement he attributed the signal success of the day. His better feelings were all up. He deplored sincerely the death of Floris Van Borselen, although he had nothing with which to reproach himself on that score, for he had distinctly intimated to William le Begue, and strictly meant to fulfil his intention of flying to his aid as soon as he could free himself a passage through the opponents to his landing. The turn given by the minister to the duke's message was dictated entirely by his own base object, one of the principal evils of despotism, which speaks through the channel of non-responsible corruption. Philip, however, fully proved to Vrank the impossibility of his giving the required succour, which the imminent peril of his own position left him in want of for himself; and in the impulse of excited and lofty feelings, of which he was very often susceptible, he promised to the son all the honours, confidence, and influence, which would have been expected by the father, had he survived the triumphant crisis.

Many other officers shared in like applause, and in substantial marks of his favour. He despoiled his person of rings, chains, and other ornaments, which he distributed to those who had fought nearest to him, or who had lost brothers or kinsmen in the battle. Among the latter were those who had to mourn for the redoubted knight De Beaufremont, De Mailli, De Bossuet, and several others. But he who stood most conspicuous in both points of view was John Vilain, whose brother Adrien was among the killed, and who had himself been the principal author of Philip's rescue.

"For thee, heroic and unfortunate Fleming," said the grateful duke, "for thee, twice the saviour of thy sovereign's life, I have nought to give worthy of thy desert or of my gratitude. But wear this collar, knight of the golden fleece, from this moment—noble that shall be as soon as thy patent of promotion, with that of other gallant knights, can be made out; and here, on the spot, appointed governor of our strong fort of Rupelmonde, on which command thou art

fully authorized to enter into prompt and well deserved possession. At this proud and hurried instant I cannot choose more marked means of doing thee honour."

Philip scarcely heard the bold Fleming's short but well-turned answer, in the din of victorious shouts which now burst out around him; French, Dutch, and Flemish all mixed in joyous confusion. The low groans of the wounded, or the deep curses of the few prisoners, were unheard in the clamour. Among the latter class was Van Hemsted, Philip's unfortunate rival commander on this disastrous day. His life was spared at the intercession of Vrank Borselen, by whose division he had been recovered from among heaps of slain, and into whose keeping he was specially entrusted. Few other Hoeks of any note fell into the victor's power. The flower of their fierce chivalry lay dead on the plains of Browershaven.

Imagination might find ample occupation in picturing the sequel of this terrible scene,—the boisterous rejoicings of the conquerors, the wild

congratulations of surviving friends, the lamentations of the fallen, the noisy attentions given to the wounded, the expedients for the gratification of hunger, the efforts to obtain repose. Discipline had reached but very imperfect limits in those times, and after so complete a victory, which left nothing to apprehend on the score of a surprise, a scene of uproarious disorder and petty pillage was the natural result. But still one sad task gave occupation to many hands. This was the burial of the slain, the painful duty which keeps alive the excitement of the soldier's mind, even after all the fatigues of action, under which worn-out nature might be supposed to sink. Several groups were already thus employed over the whole surface of the field, as soon as the sun had gone down, while the early moonbeams shone through a light shower of snow, whose transparent flakes seemed sent from Heaven to shroud the scene so disfiguring the earth.

Among the men thus occupied with the dead were the few remaining of the English prisoners,

who had miraculously escaped unhurt. These poor fellows felt it a sacred duty to look out among the slaughtered heaps, each for his own particular friends, or chosen comrades, to render their bodies the rude rites of sepulture, or take from them some tokens for their relatives in England, that might keep green the memory of those who died on the broad bed of honour in a foreign land.

Silence and melancholy were the natural features of the scene, and the actors in it performed their office, with the dreary air of men tired of the world in which they seemed to have lived a day too long. But of all, who, in small groups, or singly isolated from others, laboured in this sad vocation, one was prominent for his lingering, listless manner, as he leant on his spade and seemed to moralize deeply, or sat down on a dead body, or made lazy efforts to clothe it in a light covering of mould. This individual was slow Sefton, the soldier of the archer's company who formed one of the guard-tent party on that fatal morning.

He looked around him often with a longing eye, to recognize some living face of old companionship, but he found none such; and could any of his late comrades have seen through the deep glaze of death, they could scarcely have known their old associate in his present altered state of mien and dress.

He was completely shorn of all the decorations of soldiery. His gabardine and burgonet were flung away, as well as the several weapons formerly mentioned as composing the equipment of an archer. A coarse buckram doublet covered his body, in place of the mailed shirt: the steel plates of which had been wont to shine so gaily in the sun, and instead of the brilliant skull-piece decked with a tuft of bright red feathers, his close-cropped, shock head was powdered thick with those falling flakes, which, as in Sylvester's winter description,

"Perriwig with snow the bald-pate woods;"

and his face was thickly clotted with perspiration, gunpowder, and blood.

"Well, here's a weary world, my masters," murmured Sefton, as he looked down on the bleached and stiffened heap of carcases beside him, and seemed to address them. "Here are stabs and gashes enow in one day to satisfy grim death for a good year to come. Oh, England, England, is it at this pass with thee! thy glorious and gallant soldiers hacked, hewed, and trampled on after the fashion of mere mercenaries in a scrambling mêlée! Now suppose the ghost of our great lion-hearted King Richard was to come up from purgatory this cold evening, and sit fornent me there astride yon slaughtered man-at-arms—what would the royal spectre say? Would he not say—knowing me at once, as well as any ghost knows every living man—'Here's a coil, honest Jock Sefton, and all agone of these damned long-bows! Here's murder done on the merry men of old England, which if your advice and mine went for aught, they had all escaped! Here's the fruit of tilly-fally changes in the good old weapon which I introduced, and you practised

on! Ah, Jock, if thy left hand had grasped, as of old, a good steel latch or a horn prodd, and thy right hand pulled a stout stiff moulinet from arm's length up to thy ear's tip, thy three-cornered quarrel had entered Duke Philip's brow, as sure as the spike of that damned yellow-visaged Frenchman's shaft pierced my shoulder before—then the battle had been won, and old England's honour saved, and many a one of those fine lads been blithe and buxom still, instead of weltering in gore and snow-water, with never a spadeful of soft church-yard mould to lie lightly on their poor disfigured bodies!' 'Tis true enow for your majesty's worshipful ghost,' would I say in return, 'true enow, and sad as true! But what could Jock Sefton do, may it please your spectreship? As sure as I'm a flesh-and-blood Christian—no disrespect to your highness's shade—I aimed that wabbling arrow, at only five roods' distance, as straight as eye could aim, and as steady as arm could pull, at Duke Philip's face. But what could be looked for from a goose-feathered

shaft, which, compared to a cross-bow quarrel, is like a kestrel ruffling a pigeon's plumes to a hawk-royal piercing a partridge's breast. No, no! no good more for England, well may she go to the fiend, since the brunt of her battles depends on the long-bows.' But let me," continued Sefton, giving up the fancied colloquy, "meantime, do my duty to these poor dumb corpses," and he again turned over and examined body after body, leaving without any attempt at burial those who had not belonged to his own company. At length he came to another pause, on the spot where that company had braved the last desperate charge of the enemy; and he stood gazing intently on an upturned face, on which the moon's light flung a still more ghastly hue.

"And can this in truth be thee, Robert Moggs, old comrade of many a campaign, straight-forward soldier, though somewhat twisted and warped in thy right-hand epaulment, like a gabion or earth-bog thrown up before a redout? And so it's all over with

thee, and down thou hast sunk suddenly like the sun at midsummer! Well, lad, here's a frozen clod or two to cover thy crooked shoulder, any how, and peace be to thee, Amen!"

Sefton passed on in this way over several that were bodies of friends and foes, either unknown to him, or so disfigured by wounds and death, as to be doubtful in the imperfect light. Again he paused, stooped down closely to a new object, and then exclaimed, "What! Eh! can it be? by the rood it is! Ah, brave Serjeant, thy promotion is cut short! Poor Thorlsby! dead and gone, and thy blue nose already bleaching white in the north-east breeze! A veteran of judgment and candour! Well and wisely didst thou speak this morning of the cross-bow, and here has the bullet from an envious arquebuss gone through thy breast! A double portion of covering shalt thou have, old boy, in honour of thy rank and thy keen knowledge of arms."

As he struck his spade into the hard earth, a low moan close beside him told him that life

was not yet extinct in some body hard by. This was a common sound, and he had already heard a hundred similar ones, without suffering his attention to be arrested. He therefore went on with the imperfect burial of his old friend, but, at every stroke of the spade, a renewed moan and a murmured word of invocation came from one among the heap of bodies.

"How odd this is!" exclaimed he, "at every stroke on the earth a voice seems to come from it, as though it groaned from pain. Who can it be that thus murmurs, like the ghost of the grave?"

"Jock Sefton!" faintly uttered the voice.

"The Lord pardon me!" cried he who was thus apostrophized; "the saints pray for me! the angels be my speed! Is King Richard's ghost indeed raised up to punish my having called on him?"

His knees knocked together, his teeth chattered, the spade almost dropped from his hand, and he sat down on the nearest heap of carcases, crossing himself the while.

"Jesu Maria, save me!" exclaimed he instantly, on being thrown fairly over on his face, by a sudden heaving of the heap. "Holy St. Jude! is the dead beginning to rise?"

"Jock Sefton, Jock Sefton, pull me out of this horrid place—I hear your voice," murmured a faint sound.

"Aha! why, there's some reason in that," said Sefton, reassured, and following the suggestion of his good-nature; "now that ye talk like a christian man, be ye who ye may, I'll lend a hand for your relief. Where are you?"

No answer followed.

"Why don't ye speak, comrade? Hast died outright, in that last struggle, which flung me face to face with old Serjeant Thorlsby? What's thy name?"

Still no answer was given, though groans of every degree of agonized utterance filled the air in various directions.

"God preserve me, this is awful work!" exclaimed Sefton, looking round, and seeing no living thing, but the few dim-looking grave-

makers, an occasional horse, wildly ranging about, or some straggling crows and ravens, already attracted by the anticipated banquet.

"Awful work indeed! how horrid it is to stand intrenched in corpses, and to feel one's feet dabbling in cold blood! There's no use in staying here longer to-night, my own limbs are stiffening now, and my jaws feel hard-set as if I were one of the dead. I'll e'en leave this cursed spot, where, one by one, every comrade of mine has fallen. St. Jude! 'tis a terrible thing to think that all but myself of the dozen hale men, serjeant, corporal, and privates, who danced a mad round this morning in the guard-tent, are gone to their last account, unshrived, and with all their sins, like a crammed full canvass knapsack, on their back. Holy Mary, see them safe to Heaven!"

"Jock Sefton!" faintly murmured the same voice as before.

"Hey! again! Living still, whosoever ye be? Then, with God's blessing, I'll rescue ye, though I be forced to turn over a hundred car-

cases. Ah, this must be Corporal Crump's own big head; such another does not wag on any pair of shoulders dead or living. Jesu! 'tis the head, sure enow, but what a gash across the throat! Ah, there was the blade of a Flemish knife! Well do I remember, it was even thus with honest Ralph Mugglesford, when he fell on the breach."

"Jock, Jock, for mercy's sake pull me out," said the voice; and at the same instant a convulsive grasp caught hold of Sefton's leg.

"Ah! the devil, the devil!" cried he, striving to burst away. "Let me go! Loosen your hold! Treachery! Treachery! Help, help! Let me go, or by the rood, I'll cut thy wrist sinews across with my spade, be thou Burgundian, Hollander, or Fleming!"

"Jock, Jock! Dostn't thou know thy friend, poor Wat Bassett?"

"What! is't thou, bully Bassett, that still lives and gripes my anklet so fast! Odd's my life, if I didn't see that overgrown Flemish knight gi' thee such a thwack o' his hatchet as

must ha' laid any skull open that warn't made o' granite or iron-wood—"

"Quickly, good Jock!"

"And that southron-looking stabber, that followed at his heels, struck a thrust of his poniard under the flap of thy gabardine, that might have gone through the ribs of an ox. An' thou'rt still alive, an' it isn't thy ghost, good lad, I'll have thee up and well for little Cecily yet; so, let go thy grip, Walter, an' keep up thy spirits, sweet heart!"

In a little more, Bassett was fairly extricated from the heap of dead under which he had lain for hours, his life having been so long preserved by one of the miraculous instances of the battle-field. Sefton placed him sitting on the earth, and propped him up with three or four of his slaughtered comrades. He then did all in his power to revive him, chafed his hands, and forced some snow into his open mouth.

"With Heaven's mercy, poor lad, thou may'st yet do well," said the compassionate soldier. "Cheer thee, cheer thee, Walter! Sit

up straight man—why dost fall thus on one side? Thou hast a bold stomach, and a good courage—so, let thy head rise from thy breast. Holy Mary! how palè thou art! and what a frightful gash! Why, it has laid thy head and face open the whole length of the battle-axe blade! and, eh, what a stream of blood pours from thy side! Why, Walter! revive, good youth, and speak to your friend, Jock Sefton—odds, my life, an' I don't believe he's now dead in earnest! This burst of sharp air on his lungs, this quick motion from his prostrate posture, or God wot what it is—for I'm dull in leech-craft—has out an' out killed him in the moment I thought him saved."

And it was even so. Honest Sefton's pains were all for nought. Poor Bassett's career, his ambitious aspirations, his hopes of love, were for ever set at rest.

"Body o' me, wert thou my own brother, I had not been more shocked!" exclaimed Sefton, looking mournfully in the dead man's face. "Well, Walter, this much I swear, that if

life be spared me, and I get my liberty again from these damned Burgundians, and escape from these unlucky swamps, and ever see old England, and noble London city once more, my first visit shall be to Southwark to the sign of the White Hart. And there, if little Cecily still serves at the bar as of old, in her red kirtle and green boddice, with her sparkling black eye, her rosy cheek, and come-kiss-me lips, there will I give her a true account of these woeful doings,—and, let me see, what token shall I bring her of the lad that loved her so truly? His hair's all too clotted with blood, not to set her mad outright with grief—but here hangs the amulet, the herb-stuff of which was gathered by her own pretty fingers. I'faith, there's blood on it too—but then it comes from poor Walter's very heart, and that was the same as her own. Lie there, deceiving bauble of false security, there, in my doublet-pouch. It is for thee, little Cecily—and I vow to the holy St. Jude, in this awful hour, to place it in thy hands, as a pilgrim from the holy land might

offer a relic to our lady of grace. Eh, saints of Heaven! what a gash it was! That was the true double-stroke of fate—for while it split poor Walter's head, much I fear me 'twill break poor Cecily's heart!"

Sefton soliloquized no more, but walked slowly away in search of some refuge from cold, hunger, and sorrow.

CHAPTER V.

In proportion as the success at Amersfort had raised the Hoeks to extravagance, the disastrous day of Browershaven plunged them in despair. They made many protracted struggles for political existence during full half a century later than that time, but no marked effort worthy of their former notoriety, either as a faction, or in their better aspect, as champions of popular right opposed to aristocratic oppression.

But the battle on which we have endeavoured to fix the reader's attention, was an event of infinitely higher importance, as it regarded

Europe in general and more particularly England, than in relation to its influence on the domestic interests of Holland and Zealand. Duke Philip of Burgundy had for the first time dyed his sword in British blood. His private hatred to Glocester had overpowered his repugnance to hostility against the nation with whom he had hitherto acted in ardent alliance. His long-cherished vengeance against Charles VII. of France, seemed to fade before this new developement of passion, in proportion as personal enmity is stronger than filial resentment or national dislike. The bond of union between Burgundy and Britain was completely rent asunder, and never in Philip's person renewed. He abandoned the common cause, and went over to the common enemy—but not at once, or with the startling inconsistency of a more impetuous mind. His Dutch affairs gave him ample occupation for some time to come; and every excuse for a junction with France was allowed to acquire plausibility and force, until the gradual ruin of English domination in that

country justified the policy that abandoned a falling cause.

Humphrey of Glocester was assuredly the proximate provocation of all this. His contract with Jacqueline, upheld for awhile with such headlong imprudence, but violated so basely and so soon, was the true source of all the losses, and disgrace of England. Whatever illusions may have been carried down to posterity, respecting him, founded on the too-loosely lavished epithet attached to his name, he must stand convicted in true history as the author of irreparable injury to his country, and with one deep and indelible stain on his character; and having brought him to the term of public disgrace, we must now leave him to pursue his career of domestic indignity.

The Duke of Bedford, that true specimen of the best qualities of the age he ornamented, was in England at the present period of our tale, counteracting his brother's violent struggles to reinforce Fitz-walter's army, and obtaining the positive refusal of the parliament to sanction

a plan too sure to hasten the natural catastrophe of a breach with Philip. That point obtained, Bedford returned to France, to resume the duties of his regency, and oppose his wonted vigour to the combined efforts of the Dauphin (or the King of Bourg, as he was still called in the disparaging parlance of England), and of De Richemond, who had begun in Britanny that open hostility, which he made, in his subsequent capacity of constable of France, so fatal to English interests.

But all these individuals, though prominent in the great movements of the time, are minor personages, in comparison with her whose private happiness and political existence all hinged on the passing events. To her we must now return; and having painted her apathy when successful, and her indifference when forsaken, endeavour to portray the still deeper and more sublime traits of her character, in total abandonment, and all but utter ruin. The natural strength of Jacqueline's constitution, and her innate force of mind, had shaken off, without any

effort, the illness so strictly derivable from a moral cause. Vulgar observers attributed her recovery to joy at the successful resistance of the town in which she was cooped up, the fall of which must have compromised her liberty, or put even her life in risk. Van Monfoort, in his coarse delight, overpowered her with details of heroic exploits, which all fell dead upon her mind, that would erewhile have thrilled with sympathy. Her mother endeavoured to arouse her with hopes of ultimate triumph and incitements to vengeance, the first of which wearied, while the latter disgusted her. Benina Beyling strove to cheer her by well-meant, but weak arguments, drawn from the fountain of her own delusions, which shone in bright but unreal colouring, like the iris formed by sunshine playing upon froth. But all was in vain. Jacqueline seemed to endure life only as a burthen sufficient to fatigue, but not weighty enough to bear her down. Such were the feelings of the principal group contained in the strong place of Amersfort, when Jacqueline's brother, Lewis, arrived

from Zealand with the discouraging news, that the Vetkoopers, with their leader, Syarda, had nearly succumbed under their and Jacqueline's enemies, the Schieringers, and that no co-operation was to be expected from that quarter. The base submission of Zweder Van Calembourg to the Duke of Burgundy, was confirmed about the same time. And as a last drop to brim the cup of ill-fate, the news from Browershaven did not long linger behind, proving the truth of the proverb which gives a gregarious impulse to misfortunes.

The intelligence was like a thunderbolt to the excited and over-sanguine Hoeks. The actual effect on the chief individuals whom we have named, may be best judged from the hurried and irregular council, which they held together on receiving the afflicting news.

Jacqueline sat one day in the private apartment where we last pictured her to our readers, and her thoughts were, in all likelihood, turned back to the most impressive and important incident of her whole life, of which it was a few

weeks before the scene; for though events of more public importance had been ripe during her chequered career, nothing like that interview with Vrank Borselen had so affected her heart or so compromised her happiness. Having ascertained through Van Monfoort (to whom the grateful youth had communicated the news), that Vrank had escaped the dangers of that evening, and subsequently that he had found means, by the aid of gold, the master-key to human sympathy, to evade all pursuit, and join Duke Philip's army, she had no longer to endure the agony of fear which had for awhile oppressed her; and as she recovered from that and its consequence on her health, she gradually settled down into the hopeless composure we have described. She imposed a positive order on Benina never in the remotest way to allude to Van Borselen, and she inflicted on herself the penance of never mentioning his name. But when she would have put an interdict on thought, she found the utter fruitlessness of the attempt; and, in despair of banishing the one beloved object

from her mind, she let it reign paramount there in unresisted despotism.

On the day at which we have now arrived, she sat in her accustomed manner, looking out on the cheerless aspect of the garden. Benina Beyling occupied a stool at the other side of the flaming brazier. Both were employed in that apparently listless way, which relieves the anxious mind—the one in tracing fancied likenesses to shrubs and flowers in the snow-flakes that clothed the branches without; and the other, finding the semblance of animal monsters in the burning coal that warmed the room within.

"Prithee, Benina," at length said Jacqueline, "tune the Rebeck, and sing me a stanza from Alain Chartier's 'Book of the four Ladies.' It is, in sooth, a pleasant strain of mingled sweet and sad; its pastoral opening savours of nature's own odours; and the laments of the four hapless damsels go each and all to my very heart."

"My kind mistress," replied Benina, "I must not now turn to melancholic strains, but

will rest on those sweet preludes, which are more suiting to sick minds;" and taking up the rebeck which lay on a table close by, she ran over a few chords, and then sang, in a murmuring recitative, and with a slight accompaniment, the following opening verses of the poem alluded to by Jacqueline.

"To banish care and sweeten life,
One morning mild I sought the fields;
'Twas one of those young days that yields
Respite from sorrow and from strife—
When heart with heart its soft nest builds,
And love, and hope, and joy are rife.

"The birds around were fluttering,
And each one, with the other vying,
Sang, as it rose on ardent wing,
So very sweet, it made my heart
Flutter as though 'twould bear a part
In the gay music of the spring.

"No cloud defaced the joyous day,
The blue heavens shone in the mild ray,
The violets sprang beneath my feet,
And all things looked and smelled so sweet,
'Twas plain that Nature's own hand made them,
And they did just what nature bade them.

"The feathered tribes were in the grove;
Some sang, while other swelling throats
In doubled warblings echoing strove
To send back nature's thrilling notes.
All looked alike, yet none the same,
As, beyond count, they went and came;
And I, reclined, within the brake,
Marvelled aloud that heaven should make
Things like them, in a way so strange,
So novel, yet so free from change.
But still more wondrous 'twas to see
That each, with new-born love elate,
Whether in air, on earth, or tree,
Was coupled with one chosen mate!

"The coney and the timid hare
Ran through the leaves and flow'rets fair,
Spring held all nature in its thrall,
And love seemed lording it o'er all;
While nought could there grow old or die,
Though time changed to eternity.

"The grass sent out so sweet a balm
That fragrant filled the loaded air,
While murmuring through the valley calm
A gurgling streamlet wandered there;
And thirsty trees, that bent and drank,
With green leaves fringed the flowery bank.

"And there wild fowls in flocks resorted,
Ducks, herons, ring-doves, pheasants came.
While some the leafy arbour courted,
Others within the bright wave sported;

But if they flew, or if they swam,
All were as happy in the glade
As uncaged birds could hope to be.
The wild deer stopped to mark their glee—
But heaven, whose bright eye pierced the shade,
Knows what a chattering noise they made!

" Yet then it was my heavy heart
Most mourned in that most pleasant place,
Where all seemed fashioned to impart
Joyaunce, delight, repose, and peace—
Where nothing but some bright-winged bird
The drowsy calm of nature stirred,
Save a soft breezelet sighing on,
So still I only knew 'twas there,
By the fresh scents that filled the air
From the wild flowers it breathed upon.

" And yet—though this blest spot was full
Of all that nature's hands could form
Of bright, and pure, and beautiful,
Of rich and soft, and bland and warm,—
Yet was I sad while all was gay,
And gloom seemed mantling the bright day,
For she I love was far away!*

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* I had meant to have inserted here only the original lines, above freely imitated; but reflecting that very few English readers were likely to be familiar with the French language, as written 400 years ago, I thought it better to accompany the verses with the best translation I could effect, though that was still very imperfect. Those who take the trouble to read the one may probably be induced

"Enough, enough, dear Benina!" exclaimed Jacqueline, when her friend and confidant had

to study the other; and finally led to consult the pages of some of those early French poets, who abound in the graceful naïveté which constitutes the great charm of the present specimen. Alain Chartier flourished at the epoch of my story. He was in high favour, subsequently, at the court of Charles VII., and it may not be amiss to repeat an oft-told anecdote, as an instance of deep feeling for literary merit. While Chartier one day slept on a bench, in an ante-room of the palace, the dauphiness happened to pass, with some ladies of her train. She stopped, stooped, and kissed the poet, all ugly as he was; and on one of her attendants expressing surprise, she said, "she kissed the mouth for the sake of the sweet strains that issued from it." This fact, more than my imitation, may bespeak some favour for the following extract from the "Livre des Quatre Dames."

Pour oublier melancholie,
Et pour faire chiere plus lie,
Ung doulx matin aux champs issy,
Du premier jour qu'amours ralie
Les cueurs en la saison jolie,
Fait cesser ennuy et soucy,
Si allay tout seulet ainsi.

Tout autour oiseaulx voletoient,
Et si tres-doulcement chantoient,
Qu'il n'est cueur qui n'en fust joyeulx,
Et en chantant en l'air montoient,
Et puis l'un l'autre surmontoient
A l'estriuve à qui mieulx mieulx.

gone so far; "these sweet and thrilling pictures of pastoral joy make my heart ache with envy.

Le temps n'estoit mie mieux,
De bleu estoient vestuz les cieux,
Et le beau soleil cler luisoit,
Violettes croissoient par lieux,
Et tout faisoit ses deuoirs tieux,
Comme Nature le duisoit.

En buissons oyseaux s'assembloient,
L'ung chantoit, les autres doubloient
Leurs gorgettes, qui verboioient
Le chant que Nature a apris,
Et puis l'ung, de l'autre sembloient,
Et point ne s'entre ressembloient:
Tant en y eut que ilz sembloient
Fors à estre en nombre compris.
Si m'arrestay en ung pourpris
D'arbres, en pensant en hault pris
De nature, qui entrepris
A les faire or ainsi harper.
Mais de joie lez viz surpris,
Et d'amour nouvelle entrepris
Et ung chaseun avoit iapris
Et choisy ung seul loyal per.
Les arbres regarday flourir,
Et lieures et connins courir.
Du printemps tout s'esionyssoit.
La sembloient amour seignourir.
Nul n'y peult vieillir ne mourir,
Ce me semble, tant qu'il y soit.
Des erbes ung flair doulx issoit,
Que l'air sery adoulcissoit,

Pass on, prithee, to the grievous laments of the four ladies, and choose me her's, Benina, which

Et en bruiant par la valee
Ung petit ruissellet passoit,
Qui les pays amoitissoit.
Dont l'eaue n'estoit pas salée.
Tout au plus pres sur le pendant
De la Montaigne en descendant
Fut assiz ung joyeaux bocage
Qui au ruissel s'alloit pendant,
Et vertes courtines tendant
De ses branches sur le rinage.

Là haute maint oysel sauvage,
L'ung vole, l'autre au ruissel nage,
Canes, ramiers, herons, faisans;
Et les cerfz passoient par l'ombrage
De ces oissillons hors de cage.
Dièu scet s'ilz y estoient taisans!
Alors non cueur se guermentoit
De la grant douleur qu'il portoit,
En ce plaisant lieu solitaire,
Vu ung doulx ventelet ventoit,
Si sery qu'on ne le sentoit,
Fors que violette mieulx flaire.

La fust le graciaux repaire
De ce que nature a peu faire,
De bel et joyeulx en esté.
La návoit il riens a reffaire
De tout ce qu'il me pourroit plaire,
Mais que ma dame y eust esté.

seems to thee most sad—the first, whose lover was killed at Agincourt; the third, whose dear friend went to the battle and was heard of no more, or she, who had to deplore the cowardice of him who fled from the foe, and was dishonoured for ever."

"Or the second lady's chant, my sweet mistress—she whose young lover, only twenty years of age, was taken by the English and kept prisoner?" asked Benina, influenced by her sympathy with English renown, and in hopes of reviving Jacqueline's affection, even at the risk of pain to her feelings by this home allusion, without actually breaking her commands."

"No, Benina, pass by that—I need not such a memento of my folly, or my grief."

Benina started at this direct admission and mention of the subject, heretofore so cautiously abstained from. A deep blush on Jacqueline's cheek shewed she had been taken by surprise, and was angry either with herself or the cause of her indiscreet exclamation. But before she

could recover from, or plunge deeper into her confusion, an interruption took place, which involved her in a thousand-fold greater suffering connected with its object.

Countess Marguerite abruptly entered the room, pale with agitation; and forgetting all her usual attention to Jacqueline's delicate state, she exclaimed,

"Daughter, ill news comes thick on us. Bear up now for the worst that could befal—for total ruin. Your tyrant cousin, my hated nephew Philip, whom may God in his mercy keep from hence, or *take!* has cut the English and the Hocks to pieces in Schowen."

"Alas! poor Benina!" said Jacqueline, perceiving the shock which this sudden announcement caused her friend, who, on the old countess's entrance, had with courtly respect stood up, but who sunk on her seat again as the fatal sentence was uttered.

"Why, daughter! Jacqueline! Is it thus you receive the news of your undoing? Is it by lavishing attentions on a sensitive maid of

honour that the Countess of Holland and Hainault should meet this blow of fate! Have you no sense of your own, of mine, of your country's ruin?"

"Heaven knows, mother, my heart bleeds for its losses and for yours—for myself I care not, but I deeply feel for my poor Benina."

"I know not how she is concerned in this, or why she should claim a thought in such a crisis. I tell thee, daughter, thy cause is irreparably lost."

"Praise to the Virgin! I am then without fear as without hope."

"Oh, God, I could burst with spite and rage!" cried Countess Marguerite. "Is it thus the blood of Bavaria and Burgundy sinks down? Ah, here comes Van Monfoort with the very herald of our doom."

And at this instant the fierce chieftain entered the chamber, accompanied by one of those fear-stricken messengers of defeat, who magnify even the worst on such occasions, to justify their panic and palliate their flight.

"Noble ladies, my very good mistresses," cried Van Monfoort, yet almost unable to articulate from passion—"ye have heard the brief tidings of ruin—here is the witness reeking from his course by field and flood—all is lost—all! What is now to be done?"

"Tell me, good fellow," said Countess Marguerite, sternly, "what is the truth of this? Thy ill-omened look speaks a frightful amount of evil—what is the sum of our loss?"

"Every thing, noble dame! nought has escaped captivity, deroute, or death," replied the downcast Hoek.

"A fearful reckoning, in sooth! And now, raven-voiced fatalist, for thy details!—What men of note—what leaders have fallen?"

"A long list, Madam—both the Hemsteds—I saw their bodies trampled over by—"

"Both!" exclaimed Van Monfoort—and a deep groan, accompanied by a thump with doubled fist on his breast-plate, spoke his affliction.

"Besides these," continued the messenger;

but the chieftain fiercely stopped him, and starting forwards and seizing him by the shoulder exclaimed :—

" Hold there,—give no other name—at least lest thou tally an enemy for every friend. What Kabblejaws have been killed? out with the muster-roll of death, and let it be long and bloody!"

" First then, is Van Borselen—"

" What! art sure, comrade? Didst speak truly? Van Borselen?"

" I saw his corpse borne off in the arms of a huge Frison, long ere the fight was ended."

" Woe, woe to me for ever!" exclaimed old Ludwick, with the harsh energy of hate, that turns inward and breaks its baffled vengeance on self, but which neither his brother Hoek, nor the Countess Marguerite, both of whom watched him closely, could comprehend.

" Woe, woe! my best friends killed by the enemy, and my deadliest foe fallen by another hand than mine! The first I could have borne —but the latter! oh misery! Have I outlived

Van Borselen, and yet not had the strangling of him in this grasp!"

While Van Monfoort clenched with both hands his rapier in savage force, and muttered this fierce soliloquy, Countess Marguerite's attention was turned to Jacqueline, by an exclamation from Benina Beyling, who was roused from her own fears by the more evident and severer anguish of her mistress. As Van Monfoort, in hearing the name of Borselen, could suppose no one but his old enemy, so could Jacqueline imagine in the same sound no one but her young lover. While the rude chieftain throbbed with smothered vengeance, the gentle countess thrilled with despair; and Benina's eyes being fixed on her alone, the death-like pallor of her cheek was noticed just in time to allow this faithful friend catching her in her arms, ere exhausted feeling caused her to sink back insensible. Countess Marguerite joined her efforts with Benina's to revive the beautiful sufferer; but even in this occupation, which would have absorbed the

feelings of a more tender mother, she found time for other questions touching the fatal battle.

"And where," continued she, in broken phrase, while she looked alternately on Jacqueline, or towards the messenger, "where were those braggart islanders—those vaunted English? Did they nought for the common cause?"

"Madam, they fought like lions, and fell like heroes, each man in his rank, where he stood; and they all died with honour, save one who abandoned the rest and fled."

"And he—who is the recreant?"

"The general Fitz-walter!"

"Beggar! thou liest—basely, odiously liest! 'tis false—'tis impossible!" exclaimed the hitherto timid and yielding Benina, roused far beyond her general tone of feeling or manner, by this aspersion on him whom she considered as the very flower of chivalry. The old countess and Van Monfoort stood absorbed in wonder at

this display of unusual energy, and each irresistibly marvelled at the secret it betrayed.

Benina never for a moment abandoned her anxious care of Jacqueline, but while applying every possible means to revive her, her eye was fixed with an indignant expression on the soldier. He in his turn got warm, and raising his dagger to his mouth he kissed its hilt, and exclaimed,

"Lady! I pardon your young heart, which haply urges this unmeasured language. But, by the holy cross, I swear, I saw Fitz-walter fly from the combat, and stand aloof, while his soldiers fell in slaughtered heaps!"

"Fly!" echoed Benina, "'tis false! 'tis false!"

"It matters not, one recreant more or less," said Countess Marguerite.

"With your good leave, noble dame, it does," exclaimed Van Monfoort, "when there is a question of the honour of such a knight. Tell me, brother soldier and fellow sufferer in

this cause, did the English general quit the field ere Philip entered it?"

"No, my noble knight. In truth he only fled as if in terror at sight of the tyrant."

"Patience, damsel!" said Van Monfoort, preventing a renewed explosion of Benina's indignation. "One word reconciles all this, and redeems Fitz-walter's fame. I know he is bound by knightly pledge never to stand up in fight where Philip shews his person. A fatal pledge, I fear me, to us all!"

"Heaven be praised! if his honour be clear from stain," cried Benina; "and you, brave soldier, pardon me, and say, oh, say is Fitz-walter safe?"

"I know not, in sooth, fair mistress; he is most likely captive," replied the man.

Farther words were prevented, first by Jacqueline's recovery from her temporary unconsciousness, and her evident anxiety to discover whether any imprudent confession had escaped her. Satisfied by Benina's re-assuring expressions, she, like the rest, had time to turn her

attention to the presence of her brother Lewis, who hastily entered from the garden.

"Oh, my dear Jacqueline," said the ardent and affectionate young man, embracing his sister, "oh, most persecuted and first of women, how my heart grieves for thy fate. Thy whole possessions, thy every chance are lost! For, besides this frightful news. a messenger this moment comes breathless and spent from Brussels, to say, that John of Brabant lies at the point of death."

"That he may sink!" muttered Countess Marguerite, in a tone, which left none of her unspoken meaning to the imagination of her hearers.

"And has sent to thee, Jacqueline, his last request that you will fly to him, to receive his expiring breath, and assure him of your forgiveness. Say, my sister, what wilt thou resolve on, in so strange, so awful a crisis as this?"

"Resolve on? why to let the base tyrant die in shame and guilt, to be sure—to stay here, firmly entrenched in this victorious town, and if

needs must be, buried in its ruins! 'Tis thus I venture to speak for my gracious mistress, in trust that she will bear out my words," cried Ludwick Van Monfoort. But a far different notion had taken possession of Jacqueline's mind, suddenly but irrevocably, at the very moment that her brother announced the important message, and while her heart still throbbed with the anguish of her recent shock.

We do not wish to paint Jacqueline as more than woman, but, as she really was, of the first order of female minds. The decision she now formed, was well in keeping with that mingled humanity and courage which we love to see in her character. She saw no object before her, but the dying wretch who had been in form her husband, whose fate she had once vowed to share, and from whose presence she had been driven solely by his own brutality and consummate incapacity in all ways that could reconcile a beautiful and spirited young woman to such a mate. Now she forgot at once all his former vileness; or if remembered, it was only

with that blessed balm of forgiveness, which none but a woman's heart can pour over the memory of wrong. She at once made up her mind to accept her nominal husband's summons, and to fly to the side of his death-bed.

"Lewis," said she, in a tone tremulous but unbroken, of firmness, yet of feeling, and with no accent of reproach towards Van Monfoort. "I am resolved and ready to repair to Brussels. Heaven and the saints forbid that I should refuse the boon asked by a dying man. Thou shalt accompany me. Get horses ready for me and Benina. We have not a moment to lose."

The air which accompanied these words struck the lion of Urk quite dumb. He turned aside, abashed at his bold interference with her movements, and his misconception of her motives; and he as speedily and implicitly submitted to her dictates, as when she was in all the triumph of victory and apparent stability of power. Countess Marguerite silently pondered the question for awhile, but she soon ceased to reflect on a decision which she was resolved to

abet. She must not be suspected of any sympathy with that womanly generosity or christian benevolence, which actuated her daughter. As far as her feelings were affected, her wretched nephew and son-in-law might have gone down into the grave or *farther*, without one effort to soothe his remorse. But she saw in the present circumstances a most fortunate opportunity of recovery from the ruin which seemed, a few minutes before, quite overwhelming. She remembered Jacqueline's great popularity in Brabant and Hainault, and particularly in Brussels, where her residence had encouraged gaiety and luxury in the nobles, and consequent prosperity among the citizens at large. The former interference of the people in her favour, when their remonstrances saved her from the duke's outraging tyranny, returned to Countess Marguerite's mind, although it was at the moment quite forgotten by her own. Hatred to St. Pol, who, in case of his brother's death would be sure to advance immediate claims to the dukedom, was not without its influence on the old

countess. Altogether, she saw that the moment was arrived for one new struggle in her daughter's favour, and consequently for her own importance; and she cogitated for a few minutes how best to disavow the divorce pronounced by Benedict XIII. and declare Jacqueline's adhesion to the bull of Martin V. which confirmed her marriage with the Duke of Brabant, and would, in the event of his death, be her best title to his succession. Her mind, however, being made up on the principle — or want of principle—she did not at such a moment lose time by reflecting on the details; but with a few assenting words to Jacqueline's decision, not, however, touching on her own private motives, she hastily quitted the scene of this brief and accidental council. Jacqueline with Benina also left the room at the same instant. Lewis of Hainault was already out in the court, making immediate preparation for departure; and Ludwick Van Monfoort, when he recovered from his bewilderment at the rapid close of the conference, found himself standing in the mid-

dle of the chamber, accompanied solely by the run-away soldier, who gazed on the chieftain, as the latter did on him, as if neither had yet formed an exact estimate of his relative positions. Ludwick was the first to recover his self-command. He looked round, and saw that the more important personages had retired, and that in the present aspect of things, each individual was left to follow his own sense of right or wrong. He could not resist a feeling of mortification and pique at the disregard of his opinion so unceremoniously shewn by Jacqueline. He resolved not to be a partner in a scheme which, as it was opposed to his own views, he was resolved to see pregnant with evil. He decided on not volunteering to accompany the expedition on which the countesses were about to start, and which he was not invited to join. Like a good soldier and an unflinching Hoek, he gave his whole thoughts to the preservation of such of his followers as might choose to share his fortunes, and he resolved on evacuating the town which no point of honour

called on him to devote to ruin, when once his sovereign countess had withdrawn her person from it. His future course he left to fate, or to chance, we should rather say, for such, with a deep dash of ferocious courage, was the great impulse of such commanders as he.

"Well, comrade!" exclaimed he, as he roused up from his short reverie, with a violence of voice and gesture that made his companion start, "well, brave brother, for brave I know thee to be, though perhaps thou hadst better have died in Schowen than told its sad story here, thou seest how the world wags and how fortune drives. We have nought for it now but dauntless hearts and daring deeds. Our noble mistress, as thou seest, spurns my advice, that she should stand steady here, in the certainty of glorious destruction, and goes off at the summons of a whining hypocrite, whose fear of hell tells him he was a sinner, and makes him fancy he repents. Dead or alive, John of Brabant can claim nothing from his wife, nor do her aught but evil. But mark

my words, she is going into the pitfall of deceit and danger, when trusting herself into contact with Philip de St. Pol; but if an evil star light the path, where is the use of picking one's steps? What say'st thou, friend, wilt follow me? Wilt share my fate?"

"Will I, noble Ludwick? Will the hounds follow the huntsman, or the hawk come at the falconer's call, and shall not I track the steps of the boldest prop of chivalry and the bravest Hoek in Holland? I am yours, brave knight, for life and death, so as you but lead me to vengeance on the Kabblejaws—I ask no more."

"Thy hand, good friend!" responded Ludwick; and having grasped the hard fist, freely thrown forth on his summons, he gave and took such a reciprocity of squeeze, as would have cramped the muscles and crushed the bones of a modern hero; and ending the manual accolade with a mystic pressure of thumb—the token of true Hoekery, (but which no babbling brother has betrayed to the listening ear of history) the Lion of Urk strided off with his

follower, to do such deeds as vengeance might warrant, or desperation dictate.

Ere Jacqueline and her companions had completed their scanty preparations, or that the palfreys could be caparisoned under the care of Lewis of Hainault, the scouts of the victor's advanced guard were close to the walls of Amersfort. We may well imagine, but could not easily depict, the consternation and confusion of such a moment. The unfortunate heroine of the scene, borne up on the springs of excited sentiment, wore an air of almost unearthly energy throughout. Her promptness, her decision, her tone of command, not imperiously harsh, but as though the genius of female heroism was embodied in her person, almost overcame the sensitive delicacy of Benina's weaker mind. While she gazed on her mistress in astonishment, or wildly reverted to her own anxieties, Jacqueline seemed to have no look, nor thought, but for the high and holy object on which her heart was bent. There was a religious fervour on her bearing, which

awed even those who did not know her purpose; while those who did, regarded her as a victim self-devoted to the certainty of dangers, tenfold greater than those which threatened her on the spot she was about to quit.

Among the latter were Van Monfoort and those of the household to whom he hastily announced the destination towards which Jacqueline was hurrying. At one moment he resolved to make known to the citizens, what he was determined to believe an insane rushing upon ruin, in hopes that he might rouse them for their own, as well as their sovereign's sake, to arrest her progress. But Ludwick was a moment too late. Jacqueline and her suite, consisting of Lewis, Benina, and some half-dozen mounted attendants, with the Brussels messenger, had quickly trotted through the portal, ere the bewildered burgher clearly caught the general's meaning; and history was thus robbed of another instance of those out-bursts of affectionate violation, to what, in less popular

governments than existed then, would be looked on as treason against "the right divine."

Countess Marguerite could neither prepare for so quickly, nor contemplate with such ease, a two days' journey on horseback, no more than she could reconcile herself to form one on a visit of peace and mercy to the wretched object against whose life she had so lately plotted. She therefore resolved to place herself in the protection, and throw herself on the chivalry that bloomed under the rough covering of Van Monfoort's courage. Her acuteness told her, what his impetuosity had overlooked, that the safest and most propitious route was that of Utrecht, where Rudolf Van Diepenholt had been chosen bishop by the chapter, in defiance of Philip's opposing mandate, and where he was notoriously collecting all his strength to aid the efforts of Jacqueline and her friends: thence to the Zuyder Zee, on which William de Brederode's fleet rode proudly with Jacqueline's flag unfurled, was the wily countess's promptly traced route of flight. Van Monfoort

saw its propriety; and he fixed on Friesland as the term of his projected retreat, till some general rally might be made of the scattered partizans of freedom.

Thousands of the inhabitants of Amersfort accompanied the old countess, as she left the place in her horse-litter, escorted by the whole of Van Monfoort's brave garrison. She moved away like the sovereign lady of the land, leading her hapless tribes into the exile that was to save them from slavery, while it ensured them ruin; and as the wildly picturesque procession straggled on in one direction, Jacqueline, the real mistress of all, who reigned not only by the rules of succession but by the right of the people's love, stole away, as it were, in another, without even the appearance of retinue or power, so soothing to ruined greatness, even when it is a mockery and a jest.

CHAPTER VI.

Our readers remember the castle of Eversdyke? If so, we shall not do them the unkindness to repeat its description. If they have forgotten the former sketch of that marked feature on the face of South-Beveland scenery, we must beg them to turn back to one of those early chapters in which it is noticed; and we now entreat their company to a second visit to the sadly altered scene. How animated, how joyous was the day, when Vrank Van Borselen, after years of absence, returned to fill with sur-

prised delight the whole circle of family connections and home-feelings! What groups of pleasure were lightened by the golden sun, that glowed in its rich setting of crimson and purple clouds! How the rude accessories of feudality were imbued with a softness, caught from the sympathy of social bliss! A very few brief months had wholly effaced these impressions. Joy, hope, and sunshine had vanished from the scene. The warm beams of autumn no longer gave a flush to the outer-walls, or glowed in the mellow tints of the scant foliage around. And the discomfort that congealed each source of joy within, was in unison with the frozen brooks and snow-covered plains, and the chill that penetrated the heart of external nature.

In the very chamber, and in the same position in which our readers first saw Vrouwe Bona Van Borselen. she sat on the morning following the battle of Browershaven. She looked out towards the sea, which was no more gemmed with the diamond sparks of a September sun-

set, but which now roughly dashed over the pier at the castle's base, each wave rising like a rampant sea-horse, shaking fiercely its froth-crested mane. This was the sole symptom of the ocean, visible through the thick fog which hung, as was most usual, on the shore. There was no possibility of discovering a boat, a cable's length from the strand. Yet Vrouwe Bona long continued to look out, and the expression of her eyes seemed to pierce beyond the verge of visual bounds. Her head was frequently protruded from the narrow casement, in anxious solicitude; and when the sharp air forced her, from time to time, to draw back, it was only for so long as was required to re-adjust her mantle and hood, of crimson camlet lined with martin skins, a present from her kinsman Siccon Syarda, the chief of the Friesland Schieringers.

The cause of Vrouwe Bona's inquietude needs not to be told. A faithful wife and fond mother, whose husband and son were at the wars, could scarcely feel less, or prove her feelings

more strongly. It was not that she talked loudly. Her thoughts were too much concentrated for speech; but her self-communings had all the eloquence of the heart's best affections, mingled with a mysterious forewarning of ill, and the growing strength of a character, which had never known its own power. That some calamity was to fall on the house of Borselen had become a fixed conviction of her mind, ever since the hour of Vrank's sudden departure from Eversdyke. The rapture caused by his short visit was, to her superstition, like the lightning before death—the expiring gleam of that lamp of domestic happiness, which she had watched as intently as some vestal priestess of old, whose vigils were inspired by fanaticism mixed with fear.

Sternness was not the natural feature of Vrouwe Bona's disposition; but she had caught enough of it, from the reflection of her husband's character and the habit of the times, to cause her commands, during Heer Borselen's absence, to be implicitly observed. To be left

undisturbed was the amount of her orders for several days past. The household, now reduced to the old senechal, the children's duenna, and a few serving-maids, had rigidly observed her wishes. The usual discipline of the family prevailed more particularly at this period, and a deep and unsocial gloom pervaded the castle. The very children caught its influence, and not a laugh, not a whisper of merriment broke the solitude in which Vrouwe Bona's dignity awaited the confirmation of her evil bodings.

While she still gazed out, in rigid preparation for some sight or sound of ill, the splash of oars was distinctly borne to her ear, in the interval between the bounding of the waves, as before described, in sad-sounding breakers over the pier. The anxious woman's heart throbbed high in her breast; her breath was, for a moment, suspended; and while her eyes strained more strongly still towards the beach, she dimly saw a figure breaking through the mist, like some apparition, floating in the vague imagining of a dream. A moment more brought forth

its terrible reality. It was Oost, the dyke-digger, in the same wild habiliments which he had worn during the conflict of the preceding day, his dress still disfigured with the bloody marks, which he had but imperfectly washed from his hands and his furrowed face. The hoar-frost had settled on his frouzed and matted hair. His weather-beaten features wore a more desperate expression than ever. There was an awful energy in his air, as he stalked towards the castle gate, with eyes keenly darting towards the open casement, while one hand grasped his rarely abandoned weapon, and the other held firmly the folds of a mantle, which covered some heavy object, borne on his left shoulder.

The woman who acted as porter at the gate —for every man, capable of marching and wielding arms, was gone to battle—shrunk back with dread into her nook at sight of Oost's appalling form and look. The bandogs in the fossée, with whom his own was chained up, sent forth a plaintive howl, in tune with the whine of recognition uttered by the latter, as the free

Frison crossed the draw-bridge, and cast a passing glance at his shaggy favourite below. But even that object of his deep regard could not arrest his step, nor draw forth one word from his compressed lips. As he mounted the upper corridor, having passed the untenanted hall, he met the old and unwieldy seneschal, who putting aside the grey locks that shaded his brows, placed himself right in the middle of the passage, to know by whom, and on what authority, the strict order of etiquette was violated.

"Ah! Mynheer Oost, the dyke-digger!" said he, as he recognized the unceremonious visitor—"the most welcome of new comers to the hall of Eversdyke! The heart of the good Vrouwe, our noble and gracious mistress, will rejoice at thy presence, for she waits for the news thou bringest. But softly, softly, friend Oost, whither goest thou so fast? Halt, I prithee, old hunter of the woods! Thou must not pass farther, till I duly announce thee to my Vrouwe.—Stand fast! Thou must not force thy way."

As the old functionary spoke these words, he placed himself athwart the corridor, with open arms; and his bulky person very nearly filled the narrow pass, in a manner to force Oost to the alternative of overthrowing him on the floor, or of stopping to hold a parley. He chose the latter measure.

"Grey-headed servitor of the house of Borselen, faithful follower of its fate, sit thee down at rest, and oppose me not!" said Oost, in a tone of harsh solemnity, that filled the seneschal with unwonted awe. Yet he was not to be so easily turned out of the long-followed channel of official form.

"Good Oost, thy looks are formidable, and thy speech imposing—but thou canst not pass till the pleasure of my Vrouwe is spoken."

"Her *pleasure*, old man! I carry my warrant to enter her most holy sanctuary.—Stand by, and let me pass!"

"I tell thee no warrant of living man—nought but that of the chieftain's own hand can break through Vrouwe Bona's orders for pri-

vacy from all intrusion—so rest thee, rest thee awhile, good Oost, till I speak thy name into her ear, and learn if she find thy visit fitting."

Oost placed his tourquois against the wall, and, with giant gentleness, grasped the seneschal's arm, which he raised on a level with his own breast, and placed it under the mantle that covered his burthen.

"No warrant of living man—the chieftain's own hand, saidst thou?" exclaimed he, in a deep, thrilling whisper.—"Here, then, is my passport!"

"The saints be my speed! what horror is that!" cried the seneschal, recoiling from the object he had involuntarily touched.

"I may now pass on?" said Oost, in a tone of gloomy depth. The old man waved his hand in silent assent, for not a word could pass his chattering teeth, as he sunk on his oaken stool, with fixed eye and shuddering frame, as though palsy or convulsion had suddenly seized him. Oost said no more, but held on his course till he reached the door of the well-

known chamber, from the casement of which he had seen Vrouwe Bona's anxious and care-worn countenance.

He undid the clumsy fastening, pushed open the door, and entered. Vrouwe Bona was standing in the middle of the room, her strained looks fixed on the fearful object, whose approach she advanced so far to meet. She thought not, as of old, of the dignity of position, nor arrangement of dress. She stood up to meet a heavy blow; and the naked grandeur of natural feeling scorned the false drapery of artificial forms.

"Come forward, faithful friend—speak! I am prepared for the worst—thy tidings are already told in that fearful look! What bearest thou there?" said she, in the boldly expressive idiom of her native land.

Oost hesitated as he strove to speak, and faltered as he would have advanced. His rough nature was overpowered by her tone and look of marble despair.

"On thy fealty, and thy love for me and

mine, I conjure, I command thee to tell me all! The bow is bent to the utmost—'twill snap in twain, if held longer on the stretch!"

With these words the suffering woman placed her hands upon her heart, as if to repress some more than common pang.

"Need I tell the fiat of fate?" exclaimed Oost, with unwonted pathos of tone. "Does not the dead speak with the tongueless voice? Is not the stiffened corpse more eloquent than words?" and as he pronounced the fearful confirmation of every superstitious forewarning, he laid his mantle-covered load on the stone-table that occupied the middle of the room. He then stood, like some priest or augur at a sacrifice, with his hand on the concealed object, as though he muttered some prayer or incantation, before he unveiled the mystery of the reeking victim which lay beneath his grasp.

The glazed eyes of the wife and mother followed every movement of his hand and lip, seeming to read the meaning of each gesture and inspoken phrase.

After a pause of some moments, he said—"The benison for the slain—the ban for the destroyer—the withering curse for the betrayer, are gone up to my father's Gods! Bona of Ilst, art thou ready? shall I uncover the body?"

An upward motion of Vrouwe Bona's hand gave the signal of assent; but as Oost prepared to obey, and while he held a fold of the mantle in his hand, she felt a rush of the heart's sickness in her bosom's depth, and with an imploring look for delay, she nervously grasped his arm. He paused awhile, and the muscles of her face writhed with savage emotion, while she exclaimed in a scarce articulate voice—

"Is it my son?"

"Vrank van Borselen, Lord of Eversdyke, St. Martyn's-dyke, and Ilst, lives yet in honour and victory," was the firmly-spoken reply.

These words acted like a spell. The bound-up floods of feeling were let loose—the tight-strained chords of sensibility unstrung. Heart, limbs, and senses recovered their power alike,

and the rush of the mother's transport—the first of womanly emotions—overpowered all others for awhile. Vrouwe Bona sunk on her knees beside the table on which the husband's stiffened corpse lay clotted with frozen blood, and ere she ventured to lift the covering, she offered a deep outpouring of thanks to Heaven, for the safety of her beloved son.

"Praise to the saints!" exclaimed she, in impassioned energy, and in language that seemed to rise as her nature was elevated by the force of deep feeling; "my boy is safe!—my glorious boy—my best beloved Vrank—my pride, my blessing! Long, long may he live in virtue and fame—the honour of his race, the upholder of their renown! Oh, my heart, my heart, what a weight is removed from off thee now. Thou hadst broken quite, had the shaft of death fallen there.—What woe is to be compared—what anguish is not as bliss to that of the parents who outlive their child! Oh, these warm tears are tears of joy and gratitude, which gush forth unbidden and resistless!

He is safe! Praise be to God!—And now!" and at these words she rose up, her tall figure growing more erect with every preceding phrase, " now be for ever dashed aside the mother's weakness, and suppressed the mother's joy! Now let my heart grow stern, and my griefs be congealed, and my vengeance gain strength! Deep sorrow and high deeds befit the widow of the noble, the brave Van Borselen. Oost, raise the mantle, that I may gaze on the face of the dead!"

This order was obeyed. The disfigured body of Floris Van Borselen, in the same state in which it was borne from the battle-field, lay exposed to the stern gaze of the widowed dame. As Oost held the cloak like a canopy above it, she looked long and minutely on the convulsed features, and seemed to sound the depths of expiring hatred so terribly marked in the dead man's lip and brow, and to measure the length of the vengeance, which was now the foremost feeling of her own mind. A mixture of womanly tenderness no doubt blended with this,

and qualified its violence. The husband of her youth, the father of her children, could not lie gashed and lifeless before her, without inspiring a deep degree of emotion. But she could scarcely be said ever to have loved her lord, for there was that in him with which love could not coalesce. She had considered him more as a master than a mate. She had married him quite in girlhood, when he was no longer a youth, at the commands of parents, not by the dictates of young affection. She had wept on her wedding day, not tears of nervous delight, whose sources lie in the heart's sympathies, but of bitter grief, at the tyranny which joined her to one in common with whom her heart had no throb. The unbending of his passion for her person had contained no charms for her ; while the harshness with which he repressed her fits of girlish gaiety, and frowned down the laugh that at times burst from her surcharged breast, seemed to smother the kindly weakness which she yearned to cultivate. He was always, in short, an object of fear and of reverence. She considered

herself an appendage to, rather than a part of him. He never deigned to consult her, and had not even the tact to soothe her self-love by a feigned respect. But with all this she ripened into womanhood by his side as he sank into age. She caught his tone of thought and expression; his habits and his prejudices grew her's by degrees; and she found her thoughts and feelings insensibly in light or shade, warmed or chilled, verdant or withering, in his influence, as a satellite is affected by the varying phases of the planet round which it revolves.

"Oost!" said she, after having contemplated the corpse till a shudder of awe crept through her, "I must now do all that becomes a lorn matron towards her slaughtered lord. And first tell me who did this noble knight to death?"

"Truly, my gracious lady, that were hard to tell. These several wounds were dealt in the battle's heat. The hands which sped the shaft or sprung the match-lock are unknown to me."

"And must Floris Van Borselen sink to the grave unavenged?"

"The gods of Friesland forefend! already his fall is paid for by rich and noble blood. The Hceks are almost to a man destroyed. Zegher Van Hemsted is no more."

"Thanks be to Heaven! the warrior's ghost may rest in peace!"

"Rest!" cried Oost in a voice of reproach and fury—"no, no! Bona of Ilst—no rest nor peace can the shade of the warrior know, till vengeance deep and deadly is done on his betrayer. The red hand of the foe is cramped in death—the hot blood of those who struck his life is spilled on the plain and mingled with his own—but the pale dastard who held back relief, whose blighting treachery led to this sacrifice, yet lives—lives for thy lord's atonement, and for our revenge!"

"Son of Radbold, thy words thrill through me, like the storm-gust that shakes the forest. Name the recreant."

"William le Begue."

"It seems as though I have heard that name ere now—who is he?"

"A minion of Duke Philip—the foul channel through which the current of his princely command is made to run. 'Twas he who doomed your husband, your son, the vassals of Eversdyke, the flower of Kabblejaw chivalry to one sweeping ruin, to which the noble Floris was the first and greatest victim."

"Oost, we must seek out the traitor and deal him his reward!"

"Lady, that imploring glance, that look of fire is needless to spur me on. The wretch is already dogged to his retreat—I tracked him as a hunter tracks the quarry's steps—through snow and frost, the moon-lit mist and midnight gloom—he is within reach—he lives at our *mercy!*"

A curl of vindictive mockery was on the dyke-digger's lip as he pronounced the last words. Vrouwe Bona's responding smile was scarce less terrible.

"'Tis enough!" cried she, "even as I have in childhood frolics followed thy faithful guiding through the rocky shores and wood-paths of my native land—even as my son has trusted to thee in the forest depths of Drent—so do I now yield myself to the leading which will bring me to the goal of my vengeance."

"Come, then, lady, quickly, silently, and alone."

"What! even now?—Art sure of thy means? Wantest thou no aid?"

"If I did, 'tis not to be found here—but no, lady—this right arm is sufficient for the deed, which you must witness, and I alone may do."

"Lead me, then, as thou wilt! But first let Heaven hear my vow in this most awful hour. By this body, on which I thus place my open palm—by the soul of him who is no more—by his unappeased ghost I swear, that never food shall enter my lips, that never sleep shall close my eyes, that hunger shall gnaw and thirst parch up my worn-out frame, till he that

has proved traitor to my lord lies dead before me! nor shall this body rest in the cold tomb —but rather rot above earth till legioned worms swarm in the putrid air, and the time-worn walls grow rank in its unburied odour—before the corpse of the betrayer is as fit for the grave as that of him who was betrayed! Cover the body now, and away!"

The bloody cloak, fit pall for a dead warrior, was once more spread upon the outstretched body. And the excited widow left the mortal remains of her lord, unwatched and unwailed, while she hurried to perform the sacrifice harsh to woman's nature, and only forced on her by a barbarian sense of duty. She made Oost quit the chamber first. She closed the door herself, and held in her own keeping the huge key which was not made for lady's hands. Oost, having recovered his torquois, led the way from the castle's gates. Vrouwe Bona followed close, wrapped in her furred mantle, and scorning other preparation for her expedition. As the old seneschal saw her approach

the hall he bowed down his hoary head with respect, and a horrid misgiving of the worst, of which he had, however, no positive evidence. His mistress whispered one sentence of command in his ear.

" No one, so may the saints and martyrs be the saving of my soul !" was his solemn reply.

" 'Tis good !" said Vrouwe Bona ; and quickly and silently passing by the portress, she soon disappeared with her gigantic conductor, in the mist which thickened as the day grew old, as if to wrap their object in a secrecy as profound as it was desperate.

The seneschal and the portress looked around and listened long. But they saw nor heard no sign or sound of the departed pair. How Oost had come, or whither he had conveyed their mistress they did not dare to conjecture. Supernatural terror paralyzed their faculties of intellect as well as sense. At length driven by the cold to their respective places of shelter, the portress sought her nook; and the seneschal retired to the broken repose of his watch-

ing stool, which he removed, with the portable hearth that held his turf fire, close to the door of the room in which the dead body lay. Why his mistress had ordered him to watch at that post, and to let no living thing presume to approach it till her return, he did not venture to guess. But the icy chill that curled his blood when Oost placed his hand under the cloak, was a hint that might have solved the mystery, had not fear impelled him to suppress every thought that led to further speculation.

The day went dismally and heavily on. The evening came in dim succession; but just as night set in, the moon standing high above the sea, the whole atmosphere became bright and clear, by one of those sudden shiftings of the capricious climate, and the seneschal and the portress looked out in renewed expectation of their mistress's return, but in vain. No boat appeared in the sea, no horse approached by land; and the old man resumed his awful post and watch, at the door which he knew to enclose a mystery the nature of which he strove to shut

out from his terror-stricken mind. It was the depth of the dark night ere he was really disturbed from the broken snatches of sleep, from which, however, he had over and over started in ideal interruptions.

Vrouwe Bona had fearlessly trusted herself and her fortunes to the little skiff in which Oost had reached the shore of South Beveland. This daughter of a hardy race of amphibious freebooters, such as were the nobles of Friesland in those remote days, made light of her sufferings, from cold and damp in the unsheltered boat. She occupied the stern, and held the helm, while her half-savage pilot, equally at home on wave or woodland, mariner and hunter alike, sat midship, on the fragile skiff, and trimmed his sail, or plied his oar, as occasion required, with a skill and activity that would have inspired confidence in a weaker mind than Vrouwe Bona's, and in greater danger than she ran. Yet these were not slight. The thick fog prevented all possibility of Oost's seeing his way through the shallows, which he navigated solely

from his knowledge of the currents of these narrow seas. Had his boat struck on a sand-bank, or, by a very probable chance, fallen into the hands of some roving squadron of the enemy, destruction had been certain, for the waves had not been more merciless towards sex or age than the enraged remnants of the defeated Hoeks. But revenge was the unerring compass which guided the free Frison through the pathless waters, and the evil star of William Le Begue threw its light on his destroyer's track.

Immediately after the victory of the preceding day, Duke Philip, with considerate care, had paid prompt attention to the wants and wishes of all whom he commanded. The warriors, who had fought, were not alone provided for with all possible despatch, but the ministers who counselled, and the priests who prayed, were scrupulously attended to. Among the two latter classes, William Le Begue and Zweder Van Culembourg held a high place. The infirmities of the one, and the sensuality of the other, required shelter and refreshment; but

these enjoyments were not easily procured in the close vicinity of the battle-field, which was overrun by the ill disciplined and hungry survivors. The only unoccupied place within a moderate distance, combining the requisite accommodations, was a lone house on the southern point of the isle of Schowen, which had been abandoned by its master, a Hoek, who fell in the battle. This retreat was suggested as the fittest for the two friends, where they might quietly wait for a few days, till the conqueror's movements told them how to regulate their own.

The preparations for departure were few. A boat was procured, as the easiest and quickest mode of conveyance, and two stout fishermen undertook its safe guiding, coast-ways, along the island. The minister and the bishop embarked, with a couple of attendants and some provisions, and they blindly rejoiced in the apparent good fortune that allowed of their escape from the turmoils of military confusion.

"A good supper, my Lord Governor, a

night's rest, and a couple of days' comfort in the snug quarters of this defunct rebel, will repay us for all past privations," said the selfish and sensual Van Culembourg, with his peculiar chuckle, as he and his companion settled themselves as much as possible at their ease in the fishing-boat, and while their attendants wrapped their furred mantles around them. Whether it was from an incipient ague, the natural consequence of long exposure to cold and wet, or instinctive terror, we must be left to conjecture, but sure it is that the chattering of William Le Begue's few remaining teeth was the only reply to the ex-bishop's comforting speech. His eyes were the while fixed slantingly under his cunning brow at the figure of Oost, the dyke-digger, who stood close by on the strand.

This indefatigable friend and untiring enemy had not for one moment lost sight of his double purpose—to secure the dead body of his lord and leader, and to watch the movements of him to whom he attributed his fall. He had obtained Vrank's consent to convey his father's

remains to the paternal mansion, for the young chief, fully occupied with his soldiers, and disabled by his wound, knew that the sacred duty could to no one be so safely confided. Oost had accordingly secured a little boat; and as soon as those whom he resolved to follow had set sail, he too embarked, and kept close in their wake, sufficiently behind to be undiscovered, and only guided by the frothy track of their keel, or the voices of the sailors or servants, loudly conversing on the fluctuations of the bloody fight.

The first boat's destination was reached ere the moon had sunk. Oost heard the passengers disembark, and the boatmen preparing for their return to Browershaven. He stood out a little from shore till the coast was quite clear. Then approaching, he accurately marked the spot, and took due note of the lonely house, which was the refuge of him he had doomed to destruction. By the time his observation was complete the moon was down, and he then resumed his voyage in the stillness and gloom of night and

sea, with the awful freight of death, and nought to soothe and nourish him the while but the fierce broodings of a mind bent on a savage deed. His arrival at Eversdyke, in spite of all impediments of wind and fog, we have described; and we now return to him and the widowed Vrouwe Bona, in the solitude of the mist and the pursuance of their moody purpose.

The live-long day did the voyagers sail on, following the course of currents and counter-currents, as suited the perilous circumstances of their passage. There were many points of land and shoal to avoid and stand clear of; and even when the coast of Schowen was neared, as Oost was aware of from unerring signs, they dared not at once draw near and land, lest suspicions might arise among those with whom they were in alliance and seeming amity. During this dismal day but little was spoken between the two confederates. Some questions, briefly put and answered, on the particulars of the battle, of Van Borselen's death, Le Begue's treachery, and Vrank's safety, were the sole materials of

the unsocial colloquy. During almost the whole period Vrouwe Bona kept her eyes fixed on the waves, as though she were intent on the examination of marine phenomena, of whose nature she was nevertheless unconscious, while she but fathomed in reality the depths of her own mind. Oost meantime kept his looks divided between the heavens and the sea, watching in the first for some glimpse of sunshine, by which he might direct his course more surely, and in the other for those objects of avoidance on which his own and his companion's safety depended.

When night had fairly set in, and the moon, still overcast with vapours, favoured their design, they quitted the little boat, which lay moored on the strand, and with silent steps betook themselves to their purpose. They approached the house, from one casement of which a light glimmered down, and another was discovered through the crevices of the door beaming within the entrance hall. Every thing seemed framed by fate for the success of the plot. It was a night for murder; without gloom

enough to excite suspicion, or brightness to lead to detection—but sufficiently calm and clear to lull the victim in security, and allow the executioner to escape.

Oost and Vrouwe Bona reached the enclosed court in front of the house, and they found the door open. They did not stop with the cautious alarm of common assassins, lest their coming might be prepared for, but boldly entered the house. A lamp stood on a table which was spread with provisions and wine; and beside a blazing fire sat a serving-man, fast asleep, and with ample evidence of excess in his bloated features, and the dislocated air of neck and limb peculiar to the slumber of drunkenness. Oost cast a quick glance round the hall, then stepped quickly close to the helpless wretch, raised his club in both hands, and was about to let fall the crushing stroke of death, when the sound of a low-chuckling laugh from above stairs caused him to pause, still holding his fearful weapon high over the head of the sleeper. The lapse of a moment was sufficient to bring a flow of

mercy to Vrouwe Bona's heart. She whispered a command to her terrible companion to spare the wretch; and he, promptly calculating the advantages of an instant ascent to the chamber, from which he heard Bishop Zweder's well-remembered voice, turned instantly away, and followed by the Vrouwe, he strode up the short and narrow staircase which led to a gallery above.

A door lay half-open just opposite the landing-place. Oost saw by its position that it was that of the room whence the light beamed out on the court-yard. He was convinced that it contained the object of his search. During the short pause to give his companion time to reach the gallery, she heard the following phrases in the only language spoken by Le Begue, and of which she just knew enough to comprehend imperfectly its meaning.

"Would that Jacques were come back with the boat or litter! I like not this lonely place —phantoms seem to dance before me—that

Kabblejaw chieftain, that savage Frison, are always present to my sight."

"Hut, tut, Governor!" replied Zweder with a re-assuring chuckle, which did not, however, sound quite natural. "Fancy, pure fancy. One is certainly dead, and perhaps the other. All is safe here, and we may every minute expect back the varlet with means of removal."

"Oost!" whispered the Vrouwe, "there is no time to lose. Be quick—do the deed!"

A desperate plunge into the room was the echo to this command; and a feeble shriek of terror told the effect produced by the horrid apparition on the nerves of the sick man. Zweder was struck dumb with terror, and seemed as though apoplexy had smote him, for he fell back in the chair which he occupied beside the bed containing his ill-starred companion. A table covered with the materials of a good repast was close by, and the lamp which burned on it, gleamed on the ghastly figure of Le Begue, as he raised his skinny arms and

open hands, and sent forth desperate supplications for mercy. Oost neither understood his words nor heeded his gestures. He once more uplifted his torquois and prepared to strike, when Vrouwe Bona again interposed between him and his destined victim—but not now for mercy's sake!

"Son of Radbold!" exclaimed she, "wouldst thou stain a warrior's weapon in the blood of a thing like that?"

Oost felt the appeal, and throwing the club aside, he darted furiously on the prostrate man, while the relentless widow stood by unmoved, and the paralyzed churchman lay half senseless in his chair; the pillows and coverings of the bed became, in the hands of the giant Frison, two terrible effective instruments of the bloodless murder. Not a word was spoken—not a struggle evident—the smothered wretch was dead, ere the spirit might have been thought warned for its eternal flight.

Never was so deep a tragedy so quickly or so coolly perpetrated. There was no action, no

declamation, no passion. It had none of the imposing extravagance of romance, but all the cold reality of business. In less time than might seem meet for the arrangement of its plot, the whole was over. Vrouwe Bona and Oost retired from the chamber, descended the stairs, passed through the hall, and from the outer door, regained their boat, and set sail with a propitious breeze, and a bright beam of moonlight, which darted through the mist, as if Heaven had smiled on their savage act. They had scarcely cleared the shore when the expected servant returned with a reinforcement of men and a litter, which served to bear back the lifeless body to the head-quarters of the duke and the army.

The horror and surprise occasioned by the spectacle above stairs may be imagined. The drunken servant roused from his sleep, vehemently swore that no living being had entered the hall, and Zweder Van Culembourg recovering from his fit, believed he had been the sport of some horrid dream. The corpse shewed no marks of violence. Belief was puzzled; truth

confused; tradition left to tell what tale it best might imagine; and history most probably made, as it is too often, the vehicle of fable, while assuming the character of fact.

CHAPTER VII.

The progress of Jacqueline and her convoy, from Amersfort to Antwerp, afforded no circumstances of adventure of equal interest to the motives and object of the enterprise. She hurried on so rapidly, that no time was given for more than mere flying conjecture; and she travelled in such strict incognito, and even in such personal concealment, that none of her own loyal subjects at the several stopping-places knew to whom they furnished lodgings and refreshment; and when she reached the territories she had been wont to look on as jointly hers,

she used still greater precautions against discovery. The dangerous illness and hourly expected demise of Duke John was the topic of conversation and conjecture with all whom they came in contact with; and the subject was too engrossing to allow time for suspicion as to who the travellers might be. Lewis of Hainault managed all the arrangements of the journey; and nought occurred to interrupt his unfortunate sister's solemn tone of preparation for the future, or the strain of melancholy thought into which her mind at times so irresistibly relapsed.

We must, however, guard our readers against imagining Jacqueline to have then resembled those heart-broken heroines, of either fiction or real life, whose anguish is uncontrolled by any assuaging power. That she loved Vrank Van Borselen was true, and she deeply deplored his supposed death. But she had known him too little, and under circumstances too painful to all her proud and impassioned feelings, to have become altogether bound up in his destiny, or wholely dependent on his fate. We must even

admit that in the midst of her sorrow, there was a counteracting sentiment of consolation, that she had not absolutely disgraced her name and station, by any irrecoverable advance, towards one who had avowed his repugnance to her cause, and all but condemned her character. She rather rejoiced—but as the chastened spirit rejoiceth in the penance and pain—that she had escaped the temptation which threatened such degrading, yet delicious ruin. Viewing Van Borselen in his true light of a political enemy, her junior in years, and inferior in rank, she at times felt that she owed gratitude to Heaven for having saved her from so unsuiting a connection, and she strove to put up thanksgiving, but the pious fraud was detected and suppressed in her heart, even before her lips could utter it.

"No," thought she, "I cannot thank Heaven for this suffering, but I will bear it without complaint. I cannot believe it to be for the best—but I will make the best of it!" a short sentence, which perhaps combines all that may be expected, by either religion or philosophy.

The travellers reached Mecklin without impediment, and Jacqueline thus found herself once more in the territory of which she had for years been the acknowledged mistress. But now she seemed everywhere a stranger; exiled from Holland by an invading usurper, she could but view herself as an alien and intruder in Brabant. Ere her chagrin at this double indignity had time to ripen into indignation—the natural sequel in a proud mind—a still worse gradation awaited her. The village of Vilvorde was in sight; the two outriders of the little cavalcade had almost reached its nearest extremity; and Jacqueline and Benina had re-adjusted their hoods for the purpose of perfect concealment, when a mounted officer approached, reined up his steed, and addressed the courier who had been the bearer of the summons, on which the countess had so promptly—perhaps so inconsiderately acted. The latter of those men, after some suppressed exclamations of surprise at what was whispered him, quickly explained to her the purport of the new mes-

sage, which was that the Duke of Brabant anxiously expected her arrival in the castle of Vilvorde, (the turrets of which were close in view,) having come thus far for the purpose of meeting her.

At this news Jacqueline involuntarily stopped her palfrey. A pang of suspicion seized her. She felt not for herself; but an instant dread overpowered her, lest she had committed in some way—how, she could not stop to consider—her brother and her friend, both of them peculiarly obnoxious to the hatred of Duke John. Lewis and Benina seemed at the same moment to see the sudden light of the danger, to which they had hitherto been blind, the first from a sanguine indifference to risks, the latter from the stupor of sorrow, and both from that absorbing attachment to her they followed, which made them insensible to any peril, shared in common with her.

"Meet me at Vilvorde! why, how is this, Sir?" exclaimed Jacqueline. "Can your dying master, my unhappy cousin, be so suddenly

revived, as to allow of this removal? You gave note, methinks, that he lay at death's door in Brussels?"

"Noble lady," replied the first messenger, "I told my bidding like a trusty envoy, in strict duty to him who sent me."

"Meet me at Vilvorde! This is passing strange! What then is the Duke's present state, Sir?" said Jacqueline, addressing the last comer.

"In sooth, Madam, 'tis of a mixed and hard-to-be defined nature. Some sorrow, much rejoicing, gratitude for the goods in hand, hope for the future, and, above all things, infinite pleasure that your gracious highness is so near to his brotherly embrace."

"Brotherly embrace!" said Jacqueline; then turning to Lewis she added, "What think you of this? Are we betrayed?"

"Fair sister," replied he, "it is now too late for thought. If betrayed, may God's curse and mine light on the betrayer! But whether or no, we have now only to bear bravely whatever befals. Look yonder!"

The objects to which he pointed were nothing less than a troop of armed cavaliers, who now appeared on the high road, coming from two narrow lanes which flanked the chateau.

"Here comes his highness' body-guard to do honour to you, gracious Madam," said the officer, with an ill-repressed smile, its malignant expression being insolently reflected by the other messenger.

"On, on to the castle!" exclaimed Jacqueline, in her natural tone of prompt authority. "Let what may be meant me, I shall never be marched a prisoner to the halls where I have been wont to command and be obeyed!"

With these words she pressed her palfry to a gallop, and passed so rapidly up the nearest lane, that the astonished cavaliers composing the guard were thrown into confusion, and could hardly imagine in the intrepid mien and haughty look of the princess, aught else than the triumph of victory and conquest. While they recovered from their surprise and disorder, and followed the little cavalcade that had swept

past, endeavouring to understand the real facts of Jacqueline's situation from the messenger who had accompanied her from Amersfort, she and her attendants had reached the great entrance of the castle court. The porters who stood by, threw back the broad gates, in the usual style of obsequious humility, with which they had been accustomed to receive their duchess, but it was now the effect of her commanding air, rather than of their spontaneous welcoming.

Jacqueline, assisted by her brother, quickly dismounted from her palfry, and addressing the first of several armed officers of the ducal household, who stood under the entrance-porch, she proudly desired to be conducted to the duke. An interchange of astonished looks passed between the courtiers; but on the command being repeated in a still more determined tone, one stammeringly replied,

"Madam—certainly—I am in attendance to conduct you—but—permit me, Madam—Your imperious bearing, so different—"

"Quick, Sir Chamberlain, if you value your rod of office—lead me at once to his highness's presence—or answer the delay at your peril!"

The chamberlain attempted no further obstacle, but led the way in low-bent courtesy towards the state-chamber. Jacqueline took her brother's arm, and followed with a firm step, (Benina close behind, and her two varlets bringing up the procession,) through files of halberdiers and serving-men, who all seemed lost in wonder at the unexpected scene. Lewis of Hainault, naturally careless of consequences, relying on his sister's superior mind, took in this instance his tone from her. He bore onward, with a look of contemptuous defiance, closely clasping Jacqueline's arm under one of his, and the other supporting his sword, which he was ever ready to draw without calculation as to its chances. Benina, in all things the devoted dependent on her mistress, followed now in this movement of her fast-declining greatness, as shadows follow the forms which move towards the setting-sun.

At the door of the state-chamber, which was guarded by two men-at-arms, the chamberlain seemed again disposed to hesitate, but Jacqueline, in her highest tone and air, exclaimed,

"Open wide those doors and shew me to the presence of the duke!"

The courtier obeyed electrically—the door flew back—and his confused voice muttered imperfectly the announcement of the visitor.

"Her highness, the duchess—the countess, I should say, Madame Jacqueline of Bavaria, Holland, Hainault—and Brabant," was on the verge of his lips, but a glance from the eye of the chief personage within the chamber, reproved his first slip, and sternly looked a prohibition of a second.

"Let the Countess of Holland and Hainault advance!" said Philip de St. Pol, for it was he that filled the chair of honour, on the high-raised platform that supported the throne. He was surrounded by many of the usual officers of state, and the trappings of feudal sovereignty. He wore a frown of imperious despo-

tism on his brow; and a black scarf was slung across his richly-clad body. A misgiving fluttered Jacqueline's proud heart, and she was conscious of the chill upon her fading cheek. But she was not cast down, nor did her spirit sink one note below the pitch to which she had, within the last quarter of an hour, wound it up.

"What mockery of state is this?" exclaimed she, with a haughty glance round the chamber. "Philip de St. Pol in the chair of government? Where, then, is the Duke of Brabant?"

"Here, most meek and gentle dame, at your good service, and to execute justice on all usurpers and adulterers—no matter of which sex, or of what condition!" answered St. Pol, at the same moment taking the ducal crown from an attendant noble, and placing it on his head.

"Is this indeed so? Is then John of Brabant no more?" asked Jacqueline, with a voice faintly faltering, and eyes filling up, but from

far different emotions than any merely personal, the grossness of St. Pol even having failed to affect her.

" My unfortunate brother, more unfortunate in having been your husband, is gone at length to his heavenly reward, victim to your cruel abandonment, and his too great sensibility."

" By Heavens, Philip!" said young Lewis, " if it were not too indecorous in such a case, I could laugh outright at your mummery, as I hold your hypocrisy in scorn, and long to chastise your insolence."

" Hold, gentlemen, on your allegiance!"—

" Forbear, forbear, Lewis, as thou lovest me!"—

Were the simultaneous entreaties of St. Pol and Jacqueline, the one addressing his surrounding satellites; the other, her rashly impetuous brother. The angry nobles were appeased by the orders of their chief, and Lewis of Hainault obeyed the voice that was for him that of an oracle.

" Lewis!" resumed St. Pol; " but that thy

blood owns one branch of the source from which mine flows, I would not save it now from the blades that thy treasonous words call from their scabbards. Thy youth, too, pleads pardon for the folly which dubs thee the champion of that woman's crimes."

"Alas! how the heats of power ripen the fruit of a bad heart!" said Jacqueline. "Such was not thy language, Philip, ere that coronet came within thy reach, when thy misguided brother drove me to throw myself on thy championship, and I was by thee proclaimed as innocent as I was injured."

"Madam, I am not here to bandy words, nor can the dignity of the Duke of Brabant stoop to retrace the false compassion of the Count of St. Pol. No matter what I once believed you—'tis enough that I know you now. And that you may know yourself and your true place, I tell you you are here my prisoner, in trust for my well-beloved cousin, Philip of Burgundy, the recent conqueror, by Heaven's grace, as this morning brings me the news, of

your usurped possessions, as well as the true heritor of the Earldoms of Holland and Hainault, in the double right of successor to our late uncle, the Bishop of Liege, and of my some hours since deceased brother John, who has to him bequeathed the title acquired by his unlucky marriage with you."

Jacqueline heard this sentence of despotic wrong with a composed dignity of demeanour that filled all present with uncontrollable sentiments of admiration, and caused a lively feeling of uneasiness even in him who had uttered the flagrant decree. After some minutes' pause, during which she looked steadily, not only at St. Pol himself, but at the individuals who surrounded him, and having thus read the feelings which affected each, she said with a firm tone—

"Duke Philip—since you are indeed a duke—I have listened to your iniquitous speech, and I see the blush of shame on your cheeks. Nobles of more than one province—for I mark the men of Hainault mixed with those of Brabant—I read

your remorse in being the tools of this tyranny. I make ye no reproach. I submit to the will of Heaven. I will not utter a murmur that might raise one sword in a hopeless cause. I am, for a season, crushed !—I know how to bend to my fate—but its final result is in the keeping of Providence, and I do not despair ! No, so help me, Heaven, and the blessed saints, I am too truly innocent to doubt that my righteous cause will triumph still ! 'Tis guilt alone that weeps and wails and gnashes teeth, for it has no hope to hold by, either from man or God. But I am still strong in virtuous confidence ; and so being, I neither curse yon hypocrite duke, who has meanly and basely thus led me into his toils, nor do I upbraid you, the tools of his usurping treachery. But solemnly protesting in the face of Heaven and this assembly against the injustice of my doom, and proclaiming aloud my inviolable rights to my dominions of Holland and Hainault, of which I am now forcibly despoiled, as well as of my personal freedom, I resign

myself to captivity, and only demand to be at once led to my prison."

Before the solemn sincerity of this appeal could produce the effect he dreaded on those nobles whose fealty he was not quite sure of, St. Pol replied—

"Few criminals, Madame Jacqueline, fail to proclaim their innocence and protest against the judgment that condemns and the justice that punishes them. The world knows the value of such fertile efforts at imposture. I therefore scorn to answer that part of your appeal. But from one imputation I must free myself, calling witness the noble and loyal men who now surround me. I led you hither by no trick—I have not entrapped you—'tis Heaven's own hand that has hurried on your destiny. My poor brother, in the last weakness of decay, sent a messenger to call you to him—but this morning nature sunk, and he expired ere your tardy repentance could reach him."

"God pardon him his faults—and you this impious duplicity!" exclaimed Jacqueline.

"And now one word from me, Philip," said Lewis of Hainault,—"how comes it, if you were not privy to this plot to entrap my noble sister, that you are here? Why not at Brussels by the still warm corpse of him whose honours you inherit, and whose faults you feign to justify? Your minion who stopped our way said you came here to *meet* Jacqueline?"

"I am no more bound by the gossip of a subaltern messenger than the prattle of a hot-headed boy. I am here at Vilvorde, in fulfilment of my first duty as chief of the States of Brabant, to take the oaths of installation in my title and sovereignty, and be here proclaimed at the same time that my predecessor's death is publicly made known, pursuant to the immemorial custom of the country, and of a long untainted line, which God grant I may continue."

"Stained now, by St. Paul! in your person, too deep for washing out by all who may succeed you," retorted the passionate youth.

"Treason! treason!" exclaimed several

voices—but the new duke rose from his seat and loudly commanded the peace.

"Let the base-born boy rail on!" said he, "he cannot touch my honour more than the foul breath of a stagnant pool may taint the wild flowers on its banks. But to save us all from the scandal of a slanderous tongue, I here pronounce Lewis, Bastard of Hainault, banished from our court and presence to his own castle of Scandœurre, during our good will and pleasure from this moment—so be our ordinance obeyed! And for Madame Jacqueline of Bavaria here present, widow of our late brother and liege Lord John, whose soul Heaven pardon! we now give her up to the due care and custody of our marshal and his familiars, to be removed at once with her attendant beyond the bounds of our duchy of Brabant, and handed over to the safe keeping of our well-beloved cousin Philip Duke of Burgundy and Earl of Flanders, in his good town of Ghent—so be our ordinance obeyed.

And now let trumpets sound and the heralds speak aloud to the people.—We are ready for the ceremony of installation, and the proclamation of our title and rights!"

The duke, having uttered these commands, descended the throne, and hurried from the chamber, followed by almost the whole of the assembled nobles, and leaving Jacqueline, Lewis, and Benina all more or less bewildered by the rapid sentence that had severally condemned them. Benina was quite depressed: Lewis's buoyant temperament and overboiling rage kept him in a state of wild excitement: Jacqueline alone was calm and collected, but her heart sank at the idea of an imprisonment in Flanders, a fate which she had ever considered as the consummation of ill-luck.

"'Tis God's will, brother," said she to Lewis.

"'Tis man's wickedness," replied he, "and with Heaven's blessing my strong-hold of Scandœurre shall be once more a furnace, to heat

the missiles of unsparing war against this incarnate villany!"

"Madam, with your good leave, a close litter and an escort is ready to convey you across the frontier," said the marshal.

"Across the frontier!" exclaimed Jacqueline, her blood rushing in a flood of indignation to her face—"What! am I then a banished felon from the territory I have ruled, and durst thou, base traitor, address me as such? Is there no sword to avenge this outrage?"

"Is there *not!*" cried young Lewis, drawing his weapon, which would, in a moment more, have infallibly drank the marshal's life-blood, had not Jacqueline thrown herself on her brother's breast and held back his arm.

"Oh, God, what have I said!" cried she; "what madness urged me to risk this! Lewis, my dear brother, forbear, forbear; I knew not what I said! 'Tis all right and just—let us bow to Heaven's judgment! Down, down, insatiate demon of pride—will nothing ever humble thee? be still, hot blood of royal an-

cestry—throb not within these bursting veins! 'tis well, 'tis well! come, tyranny, and wrong, and misery—pour all your phials on my devoted head—the pure soul you cannot attaint! to thy sentence, Lewis—to thy banishment, my brother! And we, Benina, to our prison! Marshal, I wait your bidding—lead on!"

A fast embrace, prolonged convulsively on either side, was the signal of separation between brother and sister. She could have spoken, but would not—for she saw his almost suffocating emotion, and was resolved to spare him the disgrace of those tears which only wanted the utterance of a word to rush in a hot flood from his brimming eyes.

In a very brief space more, Jacqueline and Benina were led away by a by-road towards Alost, in a closely covered litter impervious to the gaze of the curious; while Lewis of Hainault was conducted to his place of exile ere it was known beyond the circle of the castle that he was in the country at all. Duke Philip's installation and proclamation went regularly on

without a dissentient voice; and ere night he was established in the palace of his ancestors at Brussels, a sovereign prince—while Jacqueline was lodged in the ancient tower of that of Ghent, a despoiled and destitute prisoner.

CHAPTER VIII.

During two months of dignified disgrace, Jacqueline remained a state prisoner in the old palace of the Earl of Flanders at Ghent. She was tended with all the honour due to her rank, and all the watchfulness called for by the importance attached to her safe-keeping. Her well-known intrepidity and spirit of enterprise made her jailers at first apprehensive of some attempt on her part to elude their vigilance; but the lapse of week after week, without the slightest discovery of such a design, lulled them into security. And so they might have safely

remained until death came to relieve her from durance, had an effort at evasion never taken place, till it might originate in her own wishes. She had no longer an object to beckon her towards freedom. All beyond the prison walls was a blank. Her world was alone within them, her only possessions, purity and strength of mind; her only wealth, the treasures of deep thought; her best enjoyments the reflections of a clear conscience. Her days and nights were passed in a monotony, that would have been intolerable to a being of her temperament, had any stimulus existed in the world from which she was shut out, to lead her mind abroad. But Jacqueline, in her youthful prime, freed from all shackles and restraint by the death of one man, and the abandonment of another, and relieved of all cares of government by the loss of her dominions, felt nothing now of that springy relief, which might be supposed to follow such moral enfranchisement. The fact was that she had not a particle of selfishness in her disposition, and was consequently dead to all enjoy-

ments that flow from solitude and insulation. Her's was rather a mind that yearned for companionship, even though it brought dependence with it. She made light of the labours of government, which tended to the interests of others associated with her own, and she could have borne cheerfully the cares of life, if borne with a yoke-fellow. But joy was no longer such if it came to her alone, and the wings of pleasure had no brilliancy while fluttering above her single head. She had now sunk into a morbid indifference to the evils, as well as to the enjoyments of life; and while in that mood, she would have considered it no blessing had her prison gates flown open, and an angel's brightness lighted the path for her escape.

Benina Beyling understood too well this state of feeling, to attempt to disturb it by any proposal for evasion, though all her own longings after liberty were excited to the highest degree in a very few days after she and her mistress—for such she still acknowledged her—had entered their splendid place of durance. Jacque-

line still had friends, desperately faithful to her cause, and solemnly sworn to effect her freedom, or perish in redoubled efforts. The reader who throws a thought back on the various personages of our tale, may enumerate several, we think, likely to become prominent in a cause, which to the heroism of chivalry joined the holiness of sentiment. Jacqueline's imprisonment was widely known throughout Europe; and while knighthood execrated the tyranny that caused, enterprise was not idle in plans that might end it.

But of all those who pledged their vows and devoted their being to the accomplishment of Jacqueline's deliverance, there was one who took the lead in those active efforts by which it was to be obtained. He, imbued with the spirit of that attachment which, nourished in secresy, and fed by hopelessness, becomes as desperate in its designs as in its chances, had staked every thing upon one attempt; and when all was ripe, he contrived to make known to Benina the extent of his plan, the names of

his accomplices, and the means of her own and Jacqueline's performance of their several parts. But for his own identity he afforded no clew. He sufficiently expressed his zeal in the cause, and proved that it was allied with courage and prudence; but in the written communication which conveyed all this, Benina could only read the devotions of an ardent partizan, without any evidence that might denote any one in particular of the several on whom she strove to affix it.

The notion of recovered liberty was dear to Benina. She had youth, friends, and hopes—all that could give strength to so natural a desire; but such was her devotedness to the mistress she so faithfully followed, that she suppressed every one of her own most cherished motives, and submitted to all the privations of lonely confinement, without even the satisfaction of gaining sympathy for the sacrifice. For she did not make known to Jacqueline, even by a repining look, or a significant word, the pain she endured in imprisonment, or the offers held

out for escape. She knew that Jacqueline would have rejected all, in the belief that Vrank Van Borselen was no more. A chance conversation, however, with their keeper's daughter, convinced Benina that the young lord of Eversdyke still survived, and that the terror of the sad story of Browershaven had alluded only to the father, but intended no intimation of the fate of the son. Had the latter been Benina's own favoured lover, instead of the object of such vague and mingled sentiments of pain and pleasure to another, she could scarcely have felt more joy than in the assurance of his preservation. But while wishing to give the warm-hearted girl full credit for as much disinterestedness as belongs to the best stamp of human nature, we may surmise that, mixed with her delight on Jacqueline's account, there was a gleam of hope connected with her own. She knew her mistress's secret feelings better than Jacqueline herself, whose forced reserve and resignation had been insufficient to conceal the workings of the secret passion, that had agi-

tated, while it was fed by hope, and now consumed her while linked with depair. Benina was therefore convinced, that when informed of the fact of Van Borselen's existence, Jacqueline would acquire a decided relish for her own; and that her consent to a well-devised plan for escape would not be so difficult, when such an object to give value to liberty was discovered, in ever such doubtful or distant perspective.

In these calculations, Benina acted on the unerring instinct of female sympathy, and she proved her sex's tact in tracing the windings of the heart that loves. We must not pause to describe the delicate and dexterous management, with which she first prepared Jacqueline for the intelligence, and finally broke it to her. There was no abrupt disclosure which might shock her feelings, or revolt her pride. She was not subjected to a burst of undignified delight, nor to the risk of a betrayal, which might have thrown back her anger at self-weakness upon the unconscious cause of its display. What Jacqueline *did* feel at the heart-reviving

news we choose to leave to our reader's fancy, but there was one point on which she and Benina were thoroughly agreed, namely, the conviction that Vrank Van Borselen was the active champion who so laboured for their escape; and they avoided with mutual reserve all expression of this belief. And on one other point they differed totally. Benina was aware, that to the conviction just stated, and to that alone, was to be attributed Jacqueline's consent to the bold plan of freedom. But Jacqueline, with a delusion common to the strongest minds, persisted in the belief that she could conceal from herself a fact, which every one of her most secret sensations betrayed.

Benina's feelings, however, offered a parallel weakness, which Jacqueline (as all can in another's case,) very easily saw through. It was nothing else but the mysterious and shadowy hope of some time or another meeting again with Lord Fitz-walter that gave the self-cheated girl the buoyant energy which she displayed throughout the adventure; while she fancied

herself worked up to a most philosophically unnatural resignation to the fate of having lost him for ever.

The reader must not now look for the minute details of a successful escape from prison, one of those inspiring instances of courage, sagacity, and good luck, which sparkle in the pages of history, amid the mournful catalogue of battle, murder, and every taint of crime, that make the records of human deeds but little more than registers of human weakness and infamy. The chronicles have handed down to us the names of the staunch associates who took the open part in this interesting enterprise, under the guidance of him who was its secret mover and main support.

These were Theodoric Van Merwede, a Hoek of fortune and influence, with two gentlemen named Spiering and Dalberg. These latter boldly ventured into the strong-hold, where Jacqueline was confined, and found means to provide her and her faithful Benina with men's suits, in which they safely passed from their

palace-prison, while their guards caroused in the false security of supper-time. They traversed the hostile city, not with paltry evasions, but in daring defiance, and did so undiscovered, proving by anticipation the axiom of Irish philosophy, put forward some centuries later, that "the best way of avoiding danger is to meet it plump."* Horses waited at a village close beyond the gates of Ghent; and ere their enemies had time to discover their escape, or they themselves to be astonished at it, Jacqueline, Benina, and her two deliverers had reached the banks of the Scheldt just opposite to the town of Antwerp.

It was lucky that active habits of horsemanship were so familiar to our heroine, and to the faithful friend and companion, who should be in justice associated with almost every word of admiration bestowed on her. Less capable equestrians might have fallen into the hands of those pursuers whom they now happily laughed to scorn; for a boat waited their arrival, float-

* Sir Boyle Roche, the *beau idéal* of Irish-bullism.

ing close to the bank, with the highest level of the tide, which just began to turn, in favouring readiness to waft them to safety. Jacqueline embarked without any inquiries as to her final destination, or questionings on the one grand object, which she nevertheless burned with impatience to be informed of. Matters of mere worldly import may excite an irritating curiosity, difficult of expression, and even when repressed most painful. But secrets of the heart may remain for a whole season unsolved, yet the mind be able to endure, ay, and even like the suspense, which it has not the courage to exchange for explanation, even though almost sure that it will be one of happiness. So it was now with Jacqueline. All the convictions of reason and feeling, told her that Van Borselen was at hand, and only waiting a safe occasion, on her own suggestion, to become revealed to her. Yet she could not resolve to summon him to her presence, and she felt an undefinable dread at every hour's approach towards the probability of his self-avowal. She

knew that his appearance, as her champion, was quite impossible, without the certainty of his ruin, on the territories of Philip of Burgundy, or his congenial ally and namesake, the new Duke of Brabant. While, therefore, she was within the limits of her enemies' possessions, she felt secure against a violation of that spell of morbid anxiety, in which she loved to feel herself bound; and as she approached the district of Holland, where her cause was still unsubdued, and her banner yet afloat, she sank into a state of tremulous delight, like a maiden who longs for, yet dreads, an avowal of the passion which she is prepared to acknowledge and return.

The boat, at length, having safely pursued the track of the river's navigation, arrived at a place on the Dutch bank, in a district, the aspect of which was soon after wholly changed, by one of those watery convulsions to which the soil was so subject in those times. The spot was wild and cheerless; no indication of social life existed, but a rude hamlet of three

or four huts, which dotted the plain, where the river's banks were dammed out from spreading desolation over the dreary district. It was the evening of the second day, when the boat reached this distant rendezvous for the appearance of him, who was all along alluded to by the two gentlemen as the main contriver of the plan, which they had so well carried into effect. Jacqueline and Benina lay reclined in the loosely constructed wooden crib, which occupied a portion of the deck, and where cushions and covering had been provided for their accommodation, and protection against the keen March wind, (which ruffled the temper of old Father Scheldt,) together with habits more suited to their sex, than those used during their escape. Our heroine, whose state of feeling we have before essayed to describe, was absorbed in one of those imperfect reveries so common to such a state, in which reflections on the past are so blended with present sensations and vague imaginings of what is to come, that we can with difficulty affix our moral identity to either of

the three tenses, which seem not to divide, but equally to possess it. Benina's feelings had still less of the positive than this—for she did not possess any certainty as to him who formed the ruling topic of her heart; and she was rather the shade of the past, or the fiction of the future, than the being of actual and present impulses.

In this state of feeling, few words were exchanged between the lovely friends; and thus they lay apparently listless, though immersed in mental occupation, when one of their deliverers respectfully opened the door of their retreat, and announced their arrival at the place of rendezvous with their unknown champion.

Jacqueline experienced a nervous thrill of agitation, such as she had never before known. The recollection of her two only interviews with Van Borselen rushed together upon her, and as they had both been sudden and unlooked-for, she now knew, for the first time, the exquisite and intoxicating pain of premeditatedly coming to a meeting with those one loves. All

the conflicts she had endured between feeling and pride for his sake and her own safety, seemed present before her. The part she had now to act became a point of most embarrassing, yet essential consideration; but it was too late. She could not prepare for the coming scene. On occasions of cold ceremony and formal grandeur, Jacqueline had ever been like other sovereigns, used to rehearse her part, and no one went better through the masquerade of state; but in affairs of the heart she could not assume a character, and impulse was alone her guide. She now, however, strove to summon all her scattered thoughts to their allegiance, and her natural tone of dignity was beginning to bring back her presence of mind, when one of the gentlemen said, in a half whisper, as though he feared the echoes of the river's bank,

"Madam, he waits to lay himself at your highness's feet."

"He waits! where, Sir, oh! where is he? lead me at once to his presence!" was the hurried reply, in which all incipient up-risings of

personal consequence, were overpowered by the unrestrained effusions of personal feeling.

"He is in yonder hut, Madam," said the gentleman, making way for Jacqueline's prompt movement out upon the open deck. Benina followed close; but the gentleman again said,

"So it suits with your gracious pleasure, Madam, he would wish your first interview to be without witnesses."

"Oh, talk not of witnesses, or delay one minute for courtly forms of speech or action! lead me to him, alone—as he likes—his pleasure is henceforth my law—let me but see my preserver!—Benina! my best friend, thou shalt rejoin me anon."

With these words Jacqueline pressed on to the side of the boat, and stepping lightly along the plank, which joined it to the shore, she was in a moment within the little abandoned hut, to which her guide conducted her. He closed the door and remained outside, while she entered; and she had no sooner crossed the threshold and cast her eyes within, than she

saw rush towards her, and throw himself on his knee at her feet, the fine figure of Lord Fitz-walter.

She looked on him for one moment of gaping astonishment. Her quick eyes next ran through the small apartment's space—then fell back again on the agitated and glowing countenance of the prostrate nobleman—and finally upturned towards Heaven, and closed in an involuntary pang of anguished disappointment.

"Oh God, it is not he!" was the deep-felt thought of sorrow, which spoke only in the sigh heaved from her bosom's inmost depth.

Fitz-walter still kept his eyes fixed on her, as her face was turned from him and covered with her hands—that dubious attitude, so natural to so many widely-varied emotions. Fitz-walter could not read its present meaning; and he may be pardoned, if, in the warmth of his own feelings, he somewhat mistook it. He caught Jacqueline's robe in his trembling grasp, and with an air of suppliant and insinuating humility, exclaimed,

"Ah, Madam! may I then read in this silence—this emotion—this surprise, pardon for my boldness in daring to become the means of saving you from harm, of restoring you to the world and your country? will an angel's voice deign to pour on mortal ear the blessed sounds?"

Low and broken sobs—the unconscious vibrations of a deeply-wounded heart—were Jacqueline's only reply. Her hands slightly shook as she pressed them to her face—but her body moved not—it neither sank down nor grew rigidly fixed, it appeared quite insensible and unaffected by the shock.—The whole suffering seemed of the soul, and that was agitated to its depths.

And what was Fitz-walter's infatuation? was it that, blinded by his passion, cherished so long and so secretly, and in circumstances so wildly romantic, he was really deceived into the belief that Jacqueline's agitation was the result of tenderness taken by surprise? Such was indeed his self-engendered deception! And he who had been for years the humble, the

hopeless worshipper of an idol, adored in a secrecy which he would not venture to violate even to himself, became now, in the crisis which was enough to daunt the most impetuous lover, gradually bold, ardent, and for a moment almost confident.

"Oh, most noble, most enchanting of women!" exclaimed he, catching the hand that had dropped listless by Jacqueline's side—"In what words may I pour out my soul before thee! How give utterance to my boundless adoration?"

There was no mistaking language like this. Had Jacqueline hovered on the grave's verge, instead of being merely plunged in mental stupor, this would have awoke her to new life. She read in one moment the whole truth of Fitz-walter's feeling for years past, and saw, with a regret far outweighing any feeling of vanity, the delusion which had so blinded Benina Beyling to them. She drew back her hand as though from infection's touch; and her astonished looks fell down on the face, which

so eloquently sent up the pleadings of devoted admiration. Fitz-walter neither felt her movement, nor saw her looks in their true light. His mind was filled with the ideal divinity of hers, so as to rob him for awhile of the less pure though more keen-sighted perception of sense; and he continued to pour forth the overflowings of his heart, in language more suited to such a worship, than to the actual avowal of flesh and blood passion. And it was for this reason, perhaps, that Jacqueline heard him out with patience, and without emotion. Had he pressed on her, with the burning fervour of such a passion as carries bliss to the bosom which returns it, and disgust to that which does not, Jacqueline had assuredly stopped him short, revolting from what would in such a case have shocked her. But all he now said and looked fell as chaste and vapoury on her mind, as a lecture on metaphysics to a blooming girl, or a mathematical treatise to an overboiling boy. The particulars of his speech may be known from Jacqueline's reply.

"I have heard you, my lord," said she, "God knows with gratitude—but not with even as much of that calm sentiment as you merit at my hands. More I cannot give, and will not assume. Let me then answer you decisively and briefly, nor blame a conciseness which springs not from insensibility, but from the apathy of a too acutely-feeling and half-broken heart. You implore me to pardon you—you talk of presumption, while you give me the deepest proof of generosity, and far too flattering tokens of attachment. I cannot forgive when you could not have offended—you cannot be presumptuous, where, alas! fate has levelled all distinctions! Despoiled, destitute, and abandoned, on whom may Jacqueline of Bavaria—no more of Holland, Hainault and the rest, look down? Who is more poor, more lowly in the scale of the cold world's calculations? No, Lord Fitz-walter, I am but your equal in those distinctions which justify alliances—I am free from all ties which might throw a bar between such an union as you offer, and which I might

without dishonour accept. But cogent reasons exist to render it impossible. In the first place, my marriage with a foreigner below the rank of royalty, would so outrage the feelings of my Dutch and Zealand subjects—my subjects! alas! alas! when shall I learn my real position—when clip the wings of those eagle-pinioned thoughts that were wont to bear me towards the sun's blazing front!"

A pause of some moments followed this outburst of unperishing ambition. Jacqueline struggled, strongly and successfully, to calm her perturbed feelings; but they left their glow on her cheek, and her eyes beamed with the flickering fire of unquenched pride. Fitz-walter, who had risen from his kneeling posture, and stood before her, (catching every word that fell, as a culprit might watch the sentence that dooms to life or death,) durst not interrupt her eloquent silence or the energy of her words. The effect of both was already working in his breast. The warm flood of sentiment, in which it erewhile felt as if afloat,

was becoming gradually congealed, as though a cold air blew by magic on the surface of some sunny lake, and froze it in the very prime of summer.

Jacqueline resumed.

"No, my lord! my ruined partizans, my native friends, my former servitors, would feel themselves degraded in what they would consider my humiliation; and no personal wish for peace, protection, or even happiness, could justify or make me consent to give one faithful Hollander a moment's pain. And how could I accept your next alternative, a residence in England, the mistress of your wide domains? Dare she, who has lived an equal in your late sovereign's court, who held your present infan monarch at the font, and answered to holy church his god-mother in baptism, appear in the proud realm of England as a private person? Would it either be just to you, that your wife should skulk in privacy and do dishonour to your rank? But these objections aside, could I condescend ever to press again the land that

holds *him* who rejected my alliance for an ignoble wanton, and who forsook the cause he swore to die for, leaving you and his other gallant countrymen to pay the sacrifices of his baseness? These reasons were enough, methinks, to shew you the impossibility of my consent. But still one more exists, greater than all the rest. For, such as I am now, there is but a single motive which could make a union with me of worth to any honourable man—my heart. That is no more in my command—'tis for ever lost to me, but not, alas! to enrich another—squandered in hopeless rashness—with nought acquired in return! I have spoken; yet no flush mantles to my brow—my bosom does not throb—my eye is not full. I make not this spontaneous confession at the shrine of pride, nor do I speak for shame's sake; but to shew you in the calm expression of my looks and voice, that all is desperate for me as it is hopeless for you!"

Fitz-walter heard patiently every word of this harangue; but the conclusion struck to his

heart. He had seen during its progress, with sensitive conviction, that Jacqueline's affections were not for him, but he had no previous notion that they were really given to another. He had hitherto feared no rival but Glocester; who, once removed by his own perfidious weakness, left Fitz-walter in the belief that he acted in an open field. But there was now in Jacqueline's manner a decision that spoke stronger than a volume of reasoning, against the hope he had derived from her misfortunes, and her widowhood; and he at once saw and submitted to the truth, with the conviction, which strikes one waking in the broad blaze of day, from some delicious dream of moonlit-phantasy.

The composure with which he acknowledged his conviction, was the effect of the reality of feelings which he had completely mistaken, but which we shall soon explain. His only difficulty in comprehending the sentence just pronounced was that of reconciling his notions of Jacqueline's high character with her having given him so lightly the favour, which he had so long and

faithfully worn, and her having so loosely alluded to it on several subsequent occasions. It was true that a token of tournament gallantry was not considered a binding pledge of affection for ever and aye; but it acquired solemnity from the long lapse which had intervened; and his constant wearing of it was, at least, enough, he thought, to have prevented any truly candid mind from feigning amazement at an avowal of love from one who had so proved his constant admiration. Thus embarrassed, he took the faded kerchief from his bosom, and said,

"Countess, you have roused me from a vision of mistaken hopes—I bow to your decree, and place at your feet the token which I have so long considered sanctified, as having come from you. I give back your favour, pure and unsullied."

This circumstance too strongly reminded Jacqueline of another, so similar as to revive an anguish she had been endeavouring to keep out of sight. But seeing the fact of Fitz-

walter's error, she made, for Benina's sake, an effort at composure that she could not have accomplished for her own.

"This, Lord Fitz-walter," said she, "is but error heaped on error—that favour was never mine!"

"Not yours! It came from your pavilion at the tournay of Windsor. It is your colour. Not yours?" exclaimed Fitzwalter, in accents of incredulity.

"It was my dear Benina who bestowed it, and with it the proudest meed to a brave man, the heart of a beautiful and virtuous woman!"

"Her *heart?*" said Fitz-walter, betraying by tone and look his involuntary satisfaction at the idea of so proud a recompense for his disappointment, so soothing a salve for his disgrace.

"Ay, verily, my Lord, her heart, whole, innocent, and better worth than that you dreamt of erewhile. Ah! did you but feel the value of that treasure, yours all unknown to you, you would see nought to be compared to it, nor cast it aside in the vain pursuit of a phantom,

which fled as you followed! Yes, my lord," continued Jacqueline, following up in successive attacks the impressions which she saw working in his silent agitation, "'twas, indeed, the favour of Benina Beyling which graced your helm in many a tilt and mêlée of war; and well might the type of a heart like her's inspire such prowess as was ever yours. Benina, my Lord, is one of a race of old and proud nobility—artless, yet high-minded—and passionately, while purely, attached to him who has taught her to love without offering a single lesson! What a triumphant conquest have you made, Lord Fitz-walter! How flattering to your best feelings! And where could you find so lovely, so devoted a mistress? What gratitude do you not owe for such an attachment—what dishonour to disavow the flame you have, even though unwillingly, fanned and fostered! Bethink you, my Lord, of all your complicated causes to honour and cherish this charming girl!"

"Countess," exclaimed the Englishman, with

much emotion, "you touch my tenderest feelings—you probe my heart—you raise my self-love, you soothe my wounded pride! Oh! how angel-like you beam upon me in that new aspect of perfection! How, oh! how can I give one thought to aught but thy amazing excellence? How ever replace with another thy image, so long throned in my breast?"

"My Lord, my Lord, this must not be; 'tis based on fiction—'tis as unreal, as Benina's feelings and your duty towards her are full of life and truth. She, Lord Fitz-walter, you never loved! Nay, start not, nor raise your hands and eyes in bootless appeal to Heaven—you never *loved* me! Ingrate I were, and worthless of your esteem, did I doubt the attachment which you have proved so long and so well. Chivalric and noble it has been—but 'twas not love. Dazzled by my rank, my adventures so marvellous, perhaps by qualities which bounteous Heaven has given me for its wise purposes, but woe is me! not yet for my own happiness, you fancied that you loved, while you but admired,

compassionated, it may be said revered me. This is not love, my Lord. Ah, no! Love is no solitary passion, that broods in a lone breast. It is gendered in two bosoms, which throb alike in woe or weal, and sink or rise in common. To love, we must be beloved. An idol may be adored, human or mortal, in reverence and without return; but that absorbing passion of the soul, worthy the name of love, exists not till heart combines with heart, and both are linked by a bifold chain of sympathy, which joins them through all time and the utmost bounds of space. This was not our case, my good Lord—therefore you loved me not!"

Fitz-walter shewed strong impatience to combat Jacqueline's theory; but she barred all reply by hurrying to another section of her thesis, ere the listener had quite recovered from the effect of her touching, and almost solemn delivery of that she had just finished.

"But if, in your heart's error, you mistook one sentiment for another, believe me, Lord Fitz-walter, a deep tendency was working

unawares, to lead your mind to that true tone of co-existing passion. Albeit unknown to you, your affections were running on with those you deemed yourself to have no share in. The hours you have passed with Benina were not without fruit. You thought it was my interests you watched over, my projects you discussed. Ah, 'twas that nameless attraction that love alone creates, which brought you so often, and kept you so long beside her. Her young affection all untold, and to herself almost unknown, was the cynosure that guided that occult and mystic course, my Lord, which every mortal heart must own, even in its own despite. Lord Fitz-walter, nature and fate have destined you to love Benina Beyling!"

Here Jacqueline resolved to complete the effect of these oracular sophistries by a dramatic stroke of living argument; and with this view she turned towards the little casement, and by pointing out, attracted Fitz-walter's observation to the figure of Benina, standing on the deck, and looking with keen solicitude towards the

hut; and while his eyes rested on the blooming face and graceful figure, Jacqueline resumed—

"See there, my Lord!—Look at her where she stands! Is not that beauty, grace, and innocence enough to make you happy? And could you, in the pride of manly conquest, doom such a being as that to pine in hopeless suffering under your abandonment? Ah, Lord Fitz-walter, how enviable to have won without pain such a trophy as that, which might do honour to a monarch's throne! Take her, my Lord—she is yours for ever and ever. I give her to you in all her charms—wear her in your heart, and may Heaven crown you both with unfading joy!"

Before the half-bewildered and wholly-gratified Fitz-walter could utter a reply, or interfere either to aid or prevent the movement, Jacqueline had thrown open the door, and beckoned Benina towards her. She, at the summons, flew along the plank to the shore, and was in a moment at the hut's entrance, where Jacqueline stood to receive her. But when stepping aside, she revealed Lord Fitz-walter, standing and

gazing, as if fixed unresisting under a magic spell, a shriek of overpowering joy burst from the astonished girl. Sight, hearing, and all the subordinate faculties of sense were for a moment paralized. Fitz-walter could not—as but few men could--resist the too-eloquent appeal of one of nature's masterpieces, thus paying homage to his influence. He caught her to his breast, and strained her to him in a tender violence, that owed its impulse to one of the strangest moods in which man ever bound himself for life and death, for better for worse, soul, body, and substance, to a doating—and must we add, a deceived—woman? But if this was betrayal, who could wish for truth? If this was not happiness, who would not pant for misery? The delighted victim, so deliciously deceived, never knew that she was so. Neither as Benina Beyling, nor as Baroness Fitz-walter,—during her few days' delay of smiling celibacy in Holland, nor for long years of wedded enjoyment in England, did she once suspect that her lord had been ever less her lover than she now be-

lieved him, or that she owed her long career of bliss to the generous advocacy of her dearly-loved mistress.

And Fitz-walter himself, recovering to the true delight of such a lot, could scarcely believe in the ambitious vision of earlier days, or bring himself to doubt that he had not all through, with fervour and faith, been the impassioned lover of her to whom he made so fond, so faithful, and so happy a husband.

CHAPTER IX.

No sooner had Jacqueline accomplished the object, so near her heart, of compromising Fitzwalter in the fact of his own and Benina's happiness, and of having them indissolubly united, by means of the nearest priest, than she turned her whole attention to the design for her personal conduct, which she hastened to execute as quickly as it was conceived.

Jacqueline saw that she had now no rational ground of hope, on the only point which made even hope—the day-star of the heart—worth having. Stunned rather than wounded, in her

recently exalted feelings, a moral trance seemed gradually to gain on her faculties of thought. She dreaded a total atrophy of mind, and she hurried her project, ere the power of action might be finally destroyed. Theodoric de Merwede had not been tardy in joining her and Fitz-walter at the appointed place of rendezvous ; and these two bold counsellors—the latter inspired by a new principle of devotion to her cause—did not fail to urge a daring effort on her part, to rally the scattered Hoeks, who still held their ground under Van Monfoort in Friesland, and make one desperate struggle for recovery of what, as they courageously argued, was not all lost. But this advice, so consonant to Jacqueline's former character and conduct, now made her sicken with disgust. Power had no longer any charms to captivate her ambition ; her mind was bent on the abandonment of every dream of greatness, and a close retirement into the seclusion of private life ; but not in the expectation of finding happiness even there. He who could have made

a peasant's hut a paradise, no longer lived for her—and thoughts even of *him* were now intolerable. Her only hope was in forgetfulness of what she was, or might have been.

Examples in abundance were not wanting to teach our ill-fated heroine the philosophy of a submission to partial, in time to save the infliction of complete ruin. But it was a deeper-seated impulse than the mere exercise of reason that now ruled the destiny which Jacqueline courted, rather than obeyed. She hurried on Benina's marriage, which was effected, ere the latter could believe in the reality of its approach; while Fitz-walter had scarcely time to repose from the tumult of his late excitement, in the new-found happiness which became his without an effort, and as he almost confessed without a title. No sooner was the nuptial knot tied, and Benina had become a bride, safe beyond the prevention of man's caprice or mortal accident, than Jacqueline insisted on the newly-joined couple repairing direct to England, leaving her to her inevitable lot.

We need not dwell on the mutual pain of such a separation between friends so reciprocally tried and proved. But the power of endurance, which kind Heaven bestows in every stage of mortal suffering, was now balanced between both, fairly in point of its effect on the mere pang of parting, but most sadly unequal in relation to the healing compensation which it brought to either mind. For while Benina's individual happiness softened the blow, Jacqueline's apathy made her less susceptible to it. But who would value the exemption from pain purchased at the price of insensibility to joy? Those who would, cannot justly understand the desolate suffering of Jacqueline.

Philip of Burgundy was at this period with part of his army before Gonda, the only town of any importance in Holland which still kept Jacqueline's banner flying on its towers. Thither she repaired, in spite of all the entreaties to the contrary of her few faithful followers; and there, to the amazement of her inveterate despoiler, she presented herself before him, un-

attended, as she was unexpected, and voluntarily offered terms of submission to his tyranny, which he could scarcely have obtained by the utmost success of a protracted struggle. In the readiness with which she entered on this treaty, and submitted to his exactions, his wily mind could see nothing but treachery and trick, and it was not till all was concluded that he could believe in the sincerity of motives, which he could not feel, and even, if believing, could not comprehend, like some of the mysteries of the faith he professed, without practising. We have passed over details of the hopeless contest, which was awhile maintained in several districts, where obstinate fidelity to Jacqueline was punished with all the force of irritated tyranny. The towns of West Friesland, Waterland, and other districts, not only paid enormous contributions to the coffers of the rapacious conqueror, but they lost their banners and privileges; and his general treatment of the whole of Holland at this epoch was so arbitrary, as to lay the foundation of the yoke which it bore for above

a century under the house of Burgundy, and then only finally escaped from by a general revolution and forty years of war.

The negociation entered into by Jacqueline with Philip under the walls of Gonda, followed by a treaty signed at Delft, recognized him as all but absolute master of her former states. He certainly allowed her to retain her titles of Countess of Holland, Hainault, Zealand, and Friesland. But she appointed him her ruward, or lieutenant, named him her heir, and consented that the nobles and the corporations of the towns should do him homage, and swear allegiance to him in those capacities. These and the other necessary articles of the treaty were, however, of slight importance, in comparison to the main one, by which Jacqueline pledged herself to the hard and humiliating condition that she would never marry without Philip's full consent, a condition considered by herself and her friends, as well as he who framed it, as tantamount to a sentence of perpetual celibacy.

Had the usual chances of life been weighed in a fair balance, Philip could have scarcely reckoned on surviving his unfortunate cousin, so many years his junior. But the laws of Nature seemed in this respect to have been already frequently suspended in his favour, and fortune as well as fate had stamped him as its especial minion. Succession after succession had dropped into his grasp, and all in whose life he had an interest, or by whose death he was to be a gainer, seemed to have taken an unnaturally early measure of their graves. Philip was probably then justified in calculating on his survivorship of Jacqueline, for whose even nominal sovereignty he panted with an insatiable longing; and to make his accession to it as secure and as speedy as possible, no means appear to have been left undone to render her new career so desolate as to break down her proud spirit, and make it long for the enfranchisement of the body's death. Philip's first care, however, was to have every possible solemnity fulfilled, the omission of which might

vitiate, even partially, his claims to the virtual sovereignty she ceded.

A tour of forced and melancholy partnership was now undertaken by the sovereign countess and the lieutenant who was to reign over her. They visited together all the principal towns of Holland, accompanied by a numerous train of courtiers and attendants, not one of whom was of Jacqueline's choice or in her confidence. Fêtes and rejoicings went on with all their usual brilliant hypocrisy; and town after town was illuminated merely that the people might be kept in the dark. But the mass were not on this occasion to be deceived, either by the ostentatious condescension of Philip, or the forced cheerfulness of Jacqueline. Deep and bitter heart-burning gnawed her discomfited friends. It was in vain that the clause of the treaty, which declared sunk for ever every nominal epithet of party-hatred, was ratified and proclaimed by common consent. Hands were grasped and shaken, and embraces exchanged with mock cordiality, which told the keen ob-

server that the parties only thus signed a manual treaty of everlasting hatred.

But Jacqueline had done her duty towards her country, and having done so she hastened to complete her self-sacrifice. To give her an excuse for the solitude to which she had doomed the remainder of her days, she chose to have herself named, by her own and Philip's joint authority, grand-master* of the forests, (violating the distinction of genders,) not only in her own nominal territories, but in those districts to which he had still unsettled claims. To this place was attached a salary of seventy nobles a year ;† and historians who have not reflected on Jacqueline's character, or her pe-

* Jacqueline was extremely masculine in her acts of state Her great seal bore the name of *Jaques*, not *Jacobe*, on the legend ; but in this defiance of genders she was not singular in history. Mary, the eldest daughter of Louis, King of Hungary, in the fifteenth century, was declared *king*, that warlike nation despising the notion of being governed by a *queen ;* and Isabella, daughter of Philip II. of Spain, long governed Belgium with her husband, Albert, by the joint title of Arch-*dukes*, nor did she exchange hers to the feminine even in her widowhood.

† About £24. sterling.

culiar motives at this period, are astonished that she could have voluntarily courted such a humiliation, which few of her former vassals of any rank would have condescended to submit to. Our readers, however, will easily comprehend, and sympathise with, her ardent longing for retirement, and that desire of an uncontrolled right in the wide range of the woods, which at this period covered the face of whole districts, that are now so many miracles of culture reclaimed from their savage state.

Jacqueline hastened to take possession of the old castle of her ancestors at the Hague, which had at this time grown from a mere hunting-lodge, built by the early Counts of Holland, into a splendid residence suited to princes, who held their rank with royalty, and ruled over an independent realm.

No motives of latent pride, no heavings of lulled ambition, betraying by its convulsive swell the storm which had raged in its victim's breast, induced Jacqueline to choose the residence of her former state. Far from attempting any

imitation of what that had been, she retired into the strictest privacy. She retained not one of the crowd of functionaries which had heretofore swarmed in her household. Almost all the great offices were suppressed, and the necessary instruments of government, who still kept their employments, were removed to other towns. Jacqueline, in short, buried in the depths of her palace, deprived of her suite, and inaccessible to visitors, was rarely seen beyond the precincts of the magnificent wood which adorned the neighbourhood, and on the verge of which the outbuildings of the castle commenced.

There, indeed, she might be often observed walking alone, in the mechanical impulse of an active constitution, seeking the mind's relief in the body's exercise ; or seated beneath the branches of some proudly-spreading member of the forest's aristocracy,* moralizing on the analogies between human and inanimate nature, the factitious gradations of rank, the mysteries

* A large and venerable tree in this wood still bears the name of Jacqueline's tree.

of bloom and decay; or profoundly examining the workings of her own heart, and retracing the passages of her checquered and most unfortunate career. She occasionally wandered beyond the extremities of the wood out into the open plains, and in the pastoral scenes beyond; but she never felt her brow or heart contracted with envy at the aspect of the world's loveliness, or the peaceful joys of the ignorant and innocent beings with whom Heaven had peopled it. She was known even more than once to have been led away by the natural bias of her social and benevolent temper, to join with some rustic groups of villagers whom she thus fell in with by chance, in the practice of the arbalette, at which we have shewn her to have been a distinguished adept. It is even recorded that on one of those occasions she carried away the prize, and while she submitted to be crowned with a garland of may-flowers and proclaimed the queen of the sports, and held forth her hands to receive the floral presents showered on her by the village maids, the tears she involun-

tarily shed were not bitter from the memory of a day of prouder, yet more fallacious triumph; but they sprung rather from one of those deep sources of delight, which overflow in the virtuous breast at the sight of others' joy. Jacqueline was used on some occasions to mount a favourite palfry, and quite unattended but by one old and tried domestic, named Gobelin, instead of the troop of pages, chamberlains, and grooms, who formerly composed her train, she used to give a loose rein and urge forward to the downs that stretch to the sea-shore, where for hours she might be seen by the straggling wood-cutters who lingered on the forest's skirts, galloping in long courses or wide circles over these desolate wilds, unconsciously rousing the timid hare, or driving the fox and coney to their earths, or breaking on the hawk's glutton-feast, and rescuing some fluttering victim from his talons. And then, when her steed required breathing-time, or she was fatigued with this mockery of by-gone sports, the lazy fishermen stretched on the sand-hills of the beach, or those

who returned in their little skiffs from hours of seaward labour, might see her as she sat unmoving in the saddle, or stood on the shore, her eyes fixed on the waves, while the fresh breeze sent her long hair streaming away behind, and painted her cheeks with a temporary bloom, which thought and sorrow as quickly caused to fade.

There is not, in short, a spot in the environs of the Hague, where the wild and beautiful of field and wood is close joined with the sublime of ocean, that is not consecrated for the enthusiast in the cause of suffering woman, by some traditionary token, or by imagined associations still more strong and more delightful.

Month after month passed in this way, and Jacqueline was gradually sinking into the worst consequences of entire seclusion from the world. She insensibly lost all those tastes and habits of thought and action which form the brilliant advantage of social life. She saw no one from abroad; received no letters but from her mother, who had retired to Germany, and Lady Fitz-walter, who now constantly lived in Eng-

land; and strictly prohibited the mention of all topics of a public or external nature, wholly confining herself to acts of charity in the surrounding districts. In this respect alone her expenditure knew no retrenchment; all applicants were profusely supplied. Wherever poverty or age asked alms, relief was granted, without any of those scrupulous qualms of the over-righteous, who draw their purse-strings closer from fear of giving to an unworthy object. She was no doubt often and often imposed on, but the pleasure of relieving one real object repays the mortification of being deceived by a dozen impostors. The old domestic before named, who was now the distributor of her bounty, knew not the extent of his beloved mistress's privations, nor imagined the possibility of her means being circumscribed. It was not, therefore, wonderful, the mistress being generous to excess, and the man improvident without bounds, that the scanty means at the disposal of both should be soon utterly exhausted. Jacqueline was confounded with sur-

prise, when this was beyond doubt evident. It seemed the very excess of disgrace. She felt as though at length hunted down by the merciless assaults of Fate. She could fly from it no further. Her haughty and harassed spirit stood at bay.

In this crisis, Jacqueline would have lain down in utter despair sooner than have recourse to any undignified or undeserving means of relief. Her arrears of stipulated income would in some measure have met her wants, but she scorned to ask them of the harsh usurper, who was only niggard on the occasions when profusion would have been a virtue. The faithful Gobelin was not so delicate as his mistress, but made anxious, although vain applications for the accumulated arrears. Baffled in the search for justice, he next tried what generosity might produce; but of all the nobles who had been, in Jacqueline's prosperity, her devoted vassals and partizans, there was not one to whom he applied for aid, that did not by some plea of poverty refuse compliance Our heroine was,

in short, at the expiration of a year, and notwithstanding all her sacrifices, and the shifts of her faithful follower, reduced to the extremity of inconvenience, if not of personal want.

One resource remained to her—an appeal to the people, whose friend she had ever been, and who were ever ready to lavish their treasure and their blood for still less holy purposes than those which Jacqueline was now debarred from effecting. But she would not condescend to let her wants be publicly known, nor consent to wring from the hard hands of industry and toil, a single contribution; a claim for which might be misconstrued or defamed.

In utter despair of any succour from either his own, or his mistress's resources, old Gobelin determined to summon the advice, at least, of him whom he knew to be the very staunchest and most unswerving of all Jacqueline's former friends—one who, while others had left her to her fate, and flocked in swarms to court the favour of Philip, scorned every abandonment of her whom he could no longer serve,

and whom he was debarred from ever seeing, and who, sooner than bow the knee to usurpation, had remained self-banished in his lonely isle, feeding his fierce regret, and brooding over plans of unformed, and perhaps impracticable vengeance.

A safe messenger found his way to Urk with Gobelin's summons; and, in as short a time as could be sufficient for the journey, Ludwick Van Monfoort was in the halls of Jacqueline's gorgeous, but most desolate palace at the Hague.

The interview which immediately followed was abrupt on the part of him who sought, deeply painful to her who granted it, and little likely to produce the result so desired by the one, and so necessary to the other. Van Monfoort was reduced to straits still narrower than Jacqueline, and was quite unable to give her any assistance beyond a species of advice, which in the first instance she rejected with a thrill of wounded pride. This was simply that she would allow him to repair on the spot to the

castle of Teylingen, at four leagues' distance from the Hague, and one beyond the town of Leyden, to make an application for her arrears of promised income, to the Count of Ostervent, the lately appointed stadtholder, or governor of Holland, in virtue of the powers assumed by Philip of naming a deputy lieutenant under himself, independent of her from whom he derived his own title.

"Never, Van Monfoort!" exclaimed Jacqueline, with a deep glow of shame, and somewhat of resentment. "No! let me perish rather than submit to this lowest depth of humiliation! Can I, who scorn to demand my right from Philip of Burgundy, stoop lower still, and ask a favour from his upstart minion? And who is this insolent stdatholder that dares to come so near my residence, and fix in the very heart of the forests, over which my recognized title of grand-master gives me sole right of range? The Count of Ostervent! What new-sprung pretender to nobility is he? I know of no such title."

"Madam, he is one of those Kabblejaw chiefs promoted in the ranks of Dutch nobility, in right of service done to the tyrant during these luckless wars. But little, methinks, it boots us now to trace his pedigree. He is the newly-named sub-governor of this unhappy country, your highness's oppressed dominion, Philip's usurped spoils. That is enough. He is the fit-existing source from which to draw your stipend. 'Tis said he is honest, and not disinclined to render you all honourable service suiting his notions of right. I am, as your highness knows, a blunt man; and I think you ought to sanction my demanding what is your due, from him who is your debtor's agent. Such is the plain counsel of Ludwick Van Monfoort."

Jacqueline remained for some minutes without replying to this speech. It had started a whole host of hidden and half-buried feelings, which now ran riot through her brain, or strove to hide still deeper in her heart, like the wild tenants of the wolds which her horse's

hoofs roused to flight, or frightened into concealment. The word Kabblejaw had left its print deep in Jacqueline's memory, but had not, for more than a year, been mentioned to her ear. Gobelin, and the two or three women who were alone suffered to approach her, had never dared to utter the forbidden sound. But the plain-speaking sincerity of Van Monfoort made light of the prohibition, which he saw good cause for disregarding.

"Ludwick Van Monfoort," said Jacqueline, at length, "it was not well done of thee to rouse the recollection of days which it were well for me had never dawned, and of persons, who, had Heaven been kind to me, had never been born. Thou knowest not, perhaps, that I have forbidden those topics for ever. Dead to the world, I must restrain all mention, if I cannot smother all memory, of the past, as I cherish no phantom hopes for the future."

"Heaven and the Saints forfend! By the bones of your buried ancestors, Madam—by the glory of your race, I swear you shall revive

and flourish still! What! think you, then, that I and some few stanch friends are yet above earth for nought?—that the burning spirit of Hoekism is laid at rest?—that usurping tyranny shall walk the land, and trample for ever on the good old cause?"

"No more, no more, I command thee!" cried Jacqueline, interrupting the fierce chieftain. "As you value my peace, or honour my privacy, no more of this! Oh, God! when will this blood run cold, when will this heart lie still! Van Monfoort! you have done me great harm—I tremble and throb with feelings I had believed dead!"

"But which cannot, which shall not die, till the race you spring from is extinct! And is it to expire with *you*, Madam? Is the blood of twenty-five sovereigns to be frozen for ever in such veins as yours? Is the heroic race to stop with her, whom nature has formed in all ways fitting to prolong it to the latest time? Not so, not so, my gracious and honoured lady—you

will revive from this torpid state to new life and long enjoyment. Nay, Madam, interrupt not your old vassal and best friend—God's grace be on us! Is it to be thought of that one so young, so beautiful, so full of life, and so formed to be loved and loving, should pine away, matchless and heirless as an old sap-dried thing like me? Are you, blooming and beautiful as you are, to have been three times spoused, and yet not once?—Forgive me, I beseech you, my mistress; but I am roused to fury at the thought of your disappointments, and the sight of your wrongs!"

Ere Jacqueline could collect the thoughts so loosely scattered by this honest outburst, and before Ludwick had time to finish the intended harangue, of which this was but the proem, an interruption took place, that led to his purpose more effectually than any possible prologue he could have uttered. Old Gobelin entered the room, with more than his usual briskness, and even less than his usual want of ceremony. He

carried a letter in his hand, which he held out to Jacqueline.

"From your lady mother, Madam," said he, "and the Saints be good to us, but her highness has accompanied her letter by a brave present. Look, Madam—look, Heer Van Monfoort, from the casement down on the court! Is not that a sight to glad the eyes of the most subtile cavalier that ever curbed steed, or rode in tournay? Look, look!"

While Jacqueline tore open the missive, with the impatience natural to those feelings of filial affection, which rise above all consciousness of a parent's errors, or even crimes, Van Monfoort looked down, as desired, upon the courtyard, called the Bintenhoff. He there observed a young horse, of most surprising beauty, in the graceful appearance of untrimmed wildness, which nature—under favour of man's superior taste—intended those beautiful animals to wear for ever. Two grooms, who bore marks of a long journey, stood at each side of the spirited animal, insidiously exciting the curvets and ca-

perings they intended to restrain, and which drew forth bursts of admiration from the straggling observers, who had followed them across the bridge into the court-yard, or come out of the offices of the palace.

An exclamation of rough applause from Van Monfoort at the gallant present, called Jacqueline herself to look out, ere she had completely perused her mother's description of the valuable animal. She gazed with great delight at this noble accession to her now most scanty stud; and in her boundless love for horse exercise, she longed to descend to the court-yard at once, and mount this bounding palfry, which she felt her capability of managing. After some minutes' indulgence in her admiration, she resumed the reading of the letter; and when she read the concluding words, she exclaimed, with an air of deeply mortified regret:

"Oh, Van Monfoort, this is too bad—this will kill me quite! Hark to my mother's words—'Receive my present with a cheerful heart—let it carry you one day to victory—and

for my love, less than its value, reward nobly the bearer of the scroll and the care-takers of the animal, which is a gift only worthy of thy acceptance, as a type of thy untameable spirit, and, I hope, thy unfading beauty.'—Reward them nobly, Ludwick! I have not the means at hand of offering the meanest largesse—what, oh! what can I do to save my mother's honour and my own?"

"The remedy is near, Madam,—say but one word, and in a moment I mount my steed and am on the road to Teylingen—the stadtholder waits but your orders for relief to any amount—I know it!"

"Away, away, then! Go! lest my pride break out again, to consume me quite!"

So saying, she rushed from the chamber into her private cabinet; and just as she had, after a lapse of some minutes, repented her words, and rose for the purpose of retracting them, she heard the tramp of hoofs below, and looking out, she saw the heavy figure of Van Monfoort borne across the draw-bridge with all the speed of which his heavy destrere was capable.

CHAPTER X.

In an almost incredibly short space of time, considering the nature of his mission and the negociation which Jacqueline authorised him to enter on, Ludwick Van Monfoort came galloping again across the drawbridge, and his horse's feet sounded once more on the pavement of the court-yard. But the tramp of others came at the same time upon Jacqueline's ear as she lay on the couch, which she had not quitted for the whole period of her ambassador's absence. She started up, and looking out, she saw the lion of Urk reach the door of entrance to the turret where she lay, and which is still pointed out to

the curious, among the clustering buildings of the Binnerhoff, as that from the windows of which Maurice of Nassau is believed (may we hope falsely ?) to have gazed two centuries later on the butchery of Barnevelt, the most virtuous politician of his age, and a model for patriots.

Jacqueline observed that Monfoort no longer rode his own clumsy and not over elegantly harnessed steed, but one of fine shape, high mettle, and superbly caparisoned. Two mounted attendants, in the handsome liveries of military service, followed close, and round the body of each she remarked a broad leathern girdle for the purpose of carrying specie, ere civilization taught men that the value of a paper medium is just proportioned to its convenience to society, which happily can stamp a worth on mashed-up rags quite equal to that, as fictitious as its own, of a thousand times its weight in metal. The carriers of the treasure on this occasion were soon disembarrassed of their load, which Van Monfoort briskly transferred to his

own shoulders, and leaving the stadtholder's horse to the care of the soldier-grooms, he entered the turret, and mounted its narrow stairs with long and heavy strides.

"Van Monfoort, can I accept this? may I again hold up my head for shame?" asked Jacqueline, as he threw the money-girths on the table, unloosed their buckles, and let the coin flow freely out.

"Madam, 'tis your own, and but a tithe of what is yours, did not the bandage of justice cover a pair of sleeping eyes. I know your noble nature, my mistress, and I can speak freely. By Heavens, then, were any other but yourself to show such qualms, I would believe it mockery! A sound kernel is often hid in a rough rind, countess, and my harsh words may have some truth in them. Believe me, then, that false delicacy is beyond all proportion worse than the real sort is worthy. Let me call Gobelin to deal out free largesse to those German grooms and your mother's messenger, and to put up the rest of the money."

"Act for me in this matter, good Ludwick—I do confess that the vice of my birth and bringing-up seems struggling with sound reason," said Jacqueline, brought to a true sense of the affair by her companion's blunt philosophy.

Gobelin was soon in the chamber, gloating with overjoyed gaze at the goodly confusion in which gold and silver pieces of various value were strewn upon the table. With a glad heart and wide-grasping hand, he carried away uncounted fistfuls, to lavish on the messengers of Countess Marguerite and Count Ostervent, as well as several poor pensioners who had long waited for the arrears of Jacqueline's usual bounty, which they now at length received with ample interest for the forced delay. While these gratifying acts of stewardship went on below, Jacqueline and Van Monfoort continued their conference above.

"And now, worthy Ludwick," said she, "that I have in part recovered from the turmoil caused by this unfortunate necessity, how, let

me ask, could you have so soon accomplished your purpose? The very ride to Teylingen and back at utmost speed could scarcely be done in the short time you have consumed, to say nothing of that required to break your purpose to this stadtholder, to allow of consideration on his part, and to pack this hateful dross, the taking of which, even though I scorn to touch it, lies so heavy on my heart!"

"Well might you marvel, Madam, had I all this to do in such brief space. But now—for the time is come—I must tell your highness, it was all arranged ere I reached this place this morning. I took my matin meal at Teylingen. Your money was ready counted, while I wended my way thence to Leyden—and it waited my return at a village still nearer at this side, under the care of the two stalwart bearers with a fresh horse for my use, furnished by their generous,—their *just* lord, who brooked no delay in his ardent wish for your service."

"What, then!—this was a plot between ye?"

"With your gracious favour, Countess, it

was. A plot for your happiness and the country's good—the first step towards the glorious change I promised you erewhile."

"Van Monfoort!"

"Come, lady, come! no looks of unnatural anger, no undeserved reproaches! You have been well served, while to all-seeming forlorn. Your friends, though ruined, have not all proved false. Fortune is gone, but neither zeal nor honour. Full fourteen months of work have ripened the fruit of our deep-laid designs. A revolt is ready to break out. Many gallant chiefs of lately-cherished feuds, have changed their very nature at the country's call, and by your inspiration. Freedom to Holland, Zealand, and Friesland! is the common cry. Factions are smothered—at least for awhile. Kabblejaw and Hoek, Schieringer and Vestkooper, have sank their mutual hate in patriot fellowship. From north to south, from east to west, from the forest-depths of Drent to the wide ocean here at hand, there is an impulse working that must be triumphant. Heaven favours us

well. The Count of Ostervent, a glorious mind cased in a goodly form, rich, brave and bountiful, has joined our cause, and common acclaim has put him at our head. We only wait for your sanction,—for your word, to put the whole scheme in motion and strike the general blow. Oh, Madam! how I glory in that flush of hereditary valour on thy fair face, that ray of ambition lighting thy bright blue eye! Then shall be the colours of our cause, red, white and blue. I adopt them for mine from this hour, and swear that Holland shall do the same. Saints of Heaven! how my old blood is up, and my loosened nerves are stiffening again in these arms. I am young once more, and my dear country, too, shall shake off the yoke of age and slavery! Now, Madam, speak! Holland waits for your words, as a legion of warriors for the trumpet's blast."

If Van Monfoort's words were not eloquence, his looks and gestures were; and Jacqueline was hurried on by their effect, as though some new Demosthenes had rolled the thunder of his

genius upon her ear. The sudden burst which had been made upon her unnatural repose, the great incitement thus rapidly urged on her, the little time for thought, and her innate ambition, all in a combined impulse, led her forward now. Battle, victory and vengeance danced confusedly in her mind, with the more noble views of her country's freedom and her people's happiness. The whole was a whirlwind inspiration, which swept her on towards her destiny.

"Be it my demon or my good angel, I know and care not now—Van Monfoort, I am all you wish or ask for!" cried she. "Lead me where and how you will—I devote myself to my country, and fearlessly throw myself on the flood, though it lead me to a cataract's verge!"

"My noble mistress! spoken like the daughter of a line of heroes! Now, hear me; Count Ostervent and some warm friends wait for the issue of this conference, with what impatience you may judge. But I vouched for the result —I knew the blood of Bavaria! In the wild woods which surround the old castle of Tey-

lingen our preparations have been long going on, and this passing visit of the stadtholder is a concerted scheme, to give him means of meeting with our common associates—and with *you!* Had he dared to risk discovery, he had been here to-day to lay his homage at your feet. But as this could not be, without braving Philip's vengeance, the count and the associate friends—conspirators, if you will, for we glory in the name—implore you to ride to-morrow morn towards Teylingen, where, under the appearance of a hunting party, you shall see all, and in a visit, as if by chance to the old pile, know more than I can venture now to tell.—Do I read your consent in this silence?"

"Yes, Van Monfoort, I will go! I have been ever but a plaything in the hands of fate—I yield myself up without reserve!"

"Then once more I do you homage and swear fealty," exclaimed Ludwick, plumping down on his knees and kissing her hand. "Long live Jacqueline of Holland, and death to the usurper of her rights!"

"Amen, amen! Long live Jacqueline!" cried old Gobelin, bursting open the door, and flinging himself beside Van Monfoort, having heard, through the pannel, every word of what passed, and proclaiming his espionage and his enthusiasm at the same time. But the one was pardoned for the sake of the other; and the narrow turret rung for some minutes with the prolonged shouts of this cordial proclamation. The scene was, however, quickly closed. Van Monfoort repaired below to send back the token agreed on to Count Ostervent, and to look after the care-taking of his own horse and of Jacqueline's new acquirement, which she was resolved to mount on the morrow. Gobelin set about his preparations for supper, and various other household details, with a spirit to which he had been long a stranger: and had he possessed such an audience of domestic associates as was formerly wont to throng the palace, he could not have failed to betray the secret, of which he had made himself the depository. The few unsophisticated menials of the present

establishment saved him, however, and his mistress as well, from the betrayal which the cunning hangers-on of a court had surely led him to. The night passed over without any breach of trust; and the morning dawned, in all the bloom of May and all the brightness of hope.

Jacqueline had striven to sleep, but in vain; snatches of slumber mixed with broken dreams brought her through the night. But though unrefreshed, she was not fatigued. Her mind, on the contrary, was kept more on the stretch than if sleep had relaxed its tone. Those who have risen, after such a night of strong excitement, can understand the elastic spring that animates both mind and body, when it seems as if we could keep awake and in action for ever; and they can picture the feverish flush on Jacqueline's cheek, the bright energy of her eyes, the activity of every movement, and the buoyancy of every thought. The nature of this state can be better felt than described, easier comprehended than defined. Had one

deep vein of feeling been laid bare in her heart, either by reflection or by the touch of some chance association, all the superficial covering of high spirits which she now displayed might have been dissolved at once, and she would no doubt have sunk into a lower despondency than before. But the suddenness of Van Monfoort's intrusion on her long-indulged mood, the vigour of his words, the stirring appeals to all the weakest as well as the strongest points of her character, both as a woman and a princess, left no time for one moment's interruption, to the overlay of artificial excitements on the natural ardour of her temperament.

She was up with the dawn; and her attendant woman was soon, by her order, employed in looking out among the confusion of her long-neglected and much-reduced wardrobe, a dress suited to the station she was soon about to reassume, and the persons whom she was going to meet. We trust that we have not in the progress of our story given any impression of its heroine, that might imply an absence—a

deficiency we are disposed to consider it—on her part, of a due attention to those minor branches of philosophy, which some call frivolous and vain. The suitableness of raiment and the becomingness of manners are links in the chain of social life, which harmonize with and beautify the whole. There is infinitely more wisdom in submitting to, than in spurning, those necessary concomitants of civilization, which, being artificial throughout, require the cement of elegance and refinement, to polish, if it cannot lighten the chain. Jacqueline was one of the most scrupulously well-dressed women of her day; and it was even the reproach of one of her country's obscure chroniclers that of the one hundred pounds sterling allowed to her per month, by Henry V., for her support while in England, one half was disbursed in attire and ornaments. Much of her former finery remained to her, but the greater part was lost during the late convulsions. It was among the residue that her woman now sought for something to suit the

present purpose; but it was not there that Jacqueline's taste was fixed.

Our readers may remember the hunting-dress worn by her on the occasion of her rendezvous with Glocester in the Zevenvolden? It had been made expressly for that occasion, with the minutest attention to effect both as to its workmanship and its becomingness. It had never been worn but on that day; and it was still as perfectly fresh and untarnished as ever. It caught Jacqueline's eye, among several others of more pretension, both in fashion and colour; and although a throb of heated recollection shook her frame, it was in a moment stifled, by that desperate resolution, with which pride can for awhile master the humiliating memory of insult and wrong.

"I *will* wear it!" exclaimed Jacqueline, in a tone as imperious as if her tire-woman had presumed to oppose her choice. But when the dress was on, every plait arranged, and every fold in place, she found that one finishing accessory was wanting—the fatal girdle, without

which the suit was incomplete. *There* lurked a danger deeper than the remembrance of Glocester's outrage. Had she suffered her mind to rest one moment there, the business of the morn, perhaps her life's whole destiny, had been upset or turned aside; but with an instinct of danger, like those who shut their eyes on a precipice's edge, she would not even look at the perilous object, but snatching it from its place in her cabinet, she hurriedly bound it round her waist, trusting to her accuracy of touch to give its due position. The golden side-plates and bullion tassels, sparkling with rubies and emeralds, were next fastened in her hair, and when the head-dress was in place, her bow in hand and quiver in belt, she stood exactly as we first introduced her in the opening pages of our tale.

Van Monfoort waited old Gobelin's summons to attend the countess to the court-yard. His eyes glistened with pride as he gazed on his beautiful and beloved sovereign, and a wide perspective of glory spread out before him. He

bowed low, but his rude emotion did not allow him to speak, as Jacqueline, after a slight repast, gave him her hand, and they descended the stair. In the court stood Van Monfoort's borrowed horse, looking fresh and glittering, but quite eclipsed by the incomparable beauty of Jacqueline's, which was at the same moment brought out from his stable. His fine limbs, compact and nervous carcase, glossy skin, flowing mane and tail, his swelling nostrils and rolling eyes, and the unruly, but by no means vicious air with which he pawed and fractured the pavement of small bricks (which was then, as now, the flooring of court and causeway throughout the country), spoke him of pure breed and high spirit—such a one, in short, as was fitting the rider who now quickly took her graceful seat, and made him feel the mastery of her light, firm hand. After a few curvettes and caprioles that at once told her the temper of her palfry, and were so encouraged or repressed as to shew him he carried command and skill on his back, Jacqueline loosened her

rein, and leading towards the wood, cantered off with Van Monfoort by her side. Old Gobelin pressed afterwards, as fast as was compatible with the wheezy and stiff-limbed animal he usually rode, urged on by a huge pair of rusty and blunted spurs, which had in earlier days formed an appanage of the war-boots of some Florent or Theodoric, names in which the early counts of Holland especially rejoiced.

Ere the wood was cleared by Jacqueline and Van Monfoort, Gobelin was thoroughly thrown out. Had the country between that and Leyden contained an elevation at all higher than a mole-hill, he might possibly have caught a distant view of his forerunners, sweeping along the causeway leading from the Hague to that town; but as it was, he never gained a glimpse of them till full an hour after their arrival at Teylingen Castle, where he had been ordered to join them as soon as he could. They had scarcely pulled in rein, or exchanged a word during the ride. Half absorbed in reverie, half excited to thoughtlessness, our heroine

hastened on, delighted with the movement and the beauty of her horse, and, as all so situated are more or less, proud, even though confined to self-observation, of the mastery over the glorious animal that owns and trembles at the influence of man's slightest touch or briefest command.

Leyden left at one side, without even a passing thought of the gallant siege it had lately stood, yet but a type of the immortal one above two centuries later, which the pen of history has recorded, and the pencil of genius consecrated*—and the deep forest which then spread over the country traversed, the travellers at length arrived within sight of the castle of Teylingen, and then for the first time pulled up their steeds, and looked on the venerable pile.

Tradition threw back its origin to the commencement of the Christian era: it was on that account alone a monument well suited to inspire respect. Its appearance was accordant to

* In the fine work of Wapper of Antwerp, exhibited at Brussels in the summer of 1830, probably the most beautiful picture painted by any Flemish artist for many a year, and promising a revival of the splendid school of Rubens and Vandyke.

its age and to the importance of the noble family who had possessed it uninterrupted, till one of the old race, having joined in the celebrated conspiracy of Gerrit Van Velsen against Floris V., Count of Holland, it was confiscated by the states of the province, and became the hereditary residence of the forester, possession being, however, granted for life to the sister of Dirk of Teylingen, its last and rebellious lord.

It was an extensive and massive construction of red brick, kept together with the cement of mixed mortar and sea-shells, common to the earliest buildings of the Christian era. Its form was in singular defiance of all regular system of architecture, the consequence, no doubt, of its being constructed at different epochs, and according to various shades of taste. Yet the general aspect was to a high degree imposing. The main building had its south-eastern side, from which Jacqueline and Van Monfoort now viewed it, the appearance of being completely circular; but at the opposite sides its aspect was angular. The top was covered by a huge

leaden cupola; the eastern and northern approaches were defended by broad and deep moats—the west and south by regular fortifications and outstanding batteries. The great entrance fronted the north, and posterns opened to the westward and eastward, the latter of which, surmounted by the little casements that lighted the dungeons, still exist in the shell of the main building.

Van Monfoort pointed out to Jacqueline the draw-bridge lowered across the moat, and quite unguarded, proving that every obstacle and every observer were designedly removed. Not even a ward was to be seen on the walls; the whole presented a picture of desolate, yet imposing majesty. It was a perfect type of solitary power; and it impressed the observers with a modified sentiment of that awe, which is one of the main attributes of the sublime, and which is ever strongly excited by monuments of mortal strength standing amidst Nature's loveliness. The thick forest all around, not one young leaf of which was seen to flutter in the stilly morning, the calm surface of the

moat on which no living thing floated, and the mysterious silence of the scene, produced altogether an irresistible feeling of dread in Jacqueline's bosom. She would not, however, give way to fear; nor was she susceptible to any of the satellite weaknesses that revolve round the orbit of that degrading passion. Suspicion, for instance, never entered her mind; and even on the present occasion, mysterious, and in some degree perilous as it was, the notion never flashed on her that Philip's jealousy of her very existence, acting on the readiness of his own creatures, and the cupidity of those who had been her partizans, might have laid a snare for her, into which she had perhaps imprudently rushed. Less nobly constituted minds would have shrunk and trembled under the apprehension of treachery—but she felt nothing such.

"How desolate and unpeopled is this huge building and its appurtenant outworks!" said she. "Can it indeed contain those friendly inmates you have led me to look for? 'Tis more like some lone castle of enchantment—How is this Van Monfoort?"

"In truth there is a magic in it, Madam," replied Ludwick, with a grim smile—a most uncommon variation to the rugged expression of his vision. "Shall we now enter?"

"Enter!" exclaimed Jacqueline, starting, as though some chord of doubt had been electrically struck within her. Then, after a moment's pause, drawing her lovely head higher up, sitting still more erect than before in her saddle, and raising her bridle hand to give her palfry a forward motion, she added, "Ay, Monfoort, I will solve this riddle, come what may!"

In an instant more she was within the great court of the castle, the gates of which lay open, without a living soul appearing either to do her honour or offer her violence. She rode on to the porch that overhung the arched door-way of the *corps-de-logis*, or main building, which was also thrown wide back on its hinges. She here sprang from her horse, Van Monfoort having also dismounted. He turned both animals loose. His own knew the way to the stables, and followed by the stranger, whose graceful boundings made the court-yard echoes

ring, was soon out of sight round an angular projection of the offices.

Jacqueline stepped on towards the entrance-door, but just as she was about to enter the porch she was arrested by the sight of a hieroglyphic emblem which hung above, of a nature so prominent and unequivocal, that it fascinated her gaze beyond the power of withdrawal, and struck her almost breathless with astonishment.

Painted in large letters on the entablature of the porch were the following words,

U

DIENAAR.

and between them hung a fresh-cut branch of willow just bursting out in the graceful foliage of spring. This emblem of feeling, properly read, made this sentence, "U WILLIGE DIENAAR," "your devoted servant:"—the word *willige* having the two meanings, *willow* and *devoted*, and the whole being, in the floral phraseology of the country and time, tantamount to a declaration of love, and a demand in marriage.

A swell of pride and resentment rushed on

Jacqueline at sight of this audacious avowal, from an unknown, and, as she indignantly felt, an upstart minion of her worst enemy; and the pang was rendered ten-fold more agonizing from the consciousness that she had been duped into the degradation of actually encountering this outrage, by the man on whom among all others she would have reckoned as the most incorruptible champion of her honour. With a look of angry reproach, she turned towards Van Monfoort; but he met her burning glance before her anger could explode, by motioning forward, and at the same time exclaiming,

"Madam, behold the Count of Ostervent!"

Jacqueline's eyes involuntarily turned in the direction of the person thus pointed out, who had advanced a few steps from the building under the porch. The tall figure of a man met her looks, dressed in the superb state-mantle of the order of nobility, his head covered with a richly-plumed and ornamented cap, and his whole air and mien assorting with the dignity of his station. But his *face!* when Jacqueline gazed on *it*, a mist seemed to rush from her

heart to her brain. She did not lose her consciousness or self-command; no shriek broke from her; no hysteric-burst betrayed her emotion; but grasping Van Monfoort's arm, she gazed before her, and felt that the blood ran visibly hot and cold from her bosom to her face, in motion so rapid as to threaten suffocation. The Count of Ostervent—albeit as moved as she was—preserved his presence of mind, and throwing off his cap and mantle, he dropped on one knee before her, and revealed the very figure and features and the identical costume of the young hunter who had broken first on her monotony of wretchedness in the forest of Drent, and whose subsequent career and conduct had been ever since the cause of such varied and painful agitation. It was in truth Vrank Van Borselen that now stood identified with the Count of Ostervent, the title just before bestowed on him, together with the office of Stadtholder of Holland, by the too tardy gratitude of Philip of Burgundy.

Who may effectively describe such a scene as this? The pen refuses to move fast enough—

it cannot keep pace with the lightning impulse of the mind, which imagines all that was looked and felt. The spoken words admit of no transcript—so few, so imperfect, so broken, that, faithfully recorded, they would only throw a taint of burlesque on the pure, bright colouring of nature and feeling.

In whatever phrase Van Borselen strove to make his emotion intelligible to the mistress of his heart—in whatever efforts at utterable reply she acknowledged his avowal—whatever might have been their looks, their tone, their gestures —it must altogether have amounted to that true eloquence which is of feeling more than of diction, and which speaks to the heart more than to the reason; for the rough sympathy of Van Monfoort paid the most unequivocal tribute to its effect, in a half-smothered whine, and a rapid repetition of thumps against his breast, which told that natural feeling was struggling for a vent, and that instinctive manliness was labouring to repress it.

The first sentence which he caught distinctly, all that preceded it having only buzzed and tingled in his ears, was spoken by Borselen.

"Let all then be forgotten *since* that day—all doubt, all fear, all suffering; let our minds revert alone to the day itself; let it be a point of happiness by which to steer our future course. Be now and ever as I saw you then, and as you look this moment, radiant and beautiful in the glow of feeling and courage! The dangers of that day were as nought to what we have now to brave together—*Thy* inspirations but as a shadow to that which animates me now."

"And *my* hope, my ardour, my affection—yes, I confess it fully!—but the dawning of morn compared to the meridian blaze that lights me on to-day! Oh, Van Borselen, can this be true? Am I not the sport of some wild phantasy? Do I live, indeed, in the certainty of this happiness? Is all that you tell me real—all you look sincere? My incredulous heart still throbs in doubt: I want yet some proof."

"This, this, then, be the proof of my unbounded attachment, my eternal devotion, my audacious love! ——————!! Bid me now die for my offence, and expiate it on the spot!"

With the first words of this speech he sprang from the kneeling posture in which he had for many preceding minutes remained, as if transfixed in immovable awe. During the long pause, which we have striven to make expressive by an unusual connecting *dash*, he had thrown his arm round Jacqueline's unshrinking form, and imprinted on her lips such a succession of eloquent evidences of his and her own being, as would remove the doubts of the most sceptic infidel that ever marvelled at a miracle. When the phrase was finished, and the evidence registered in her heart, he loosed his clasp, withdrew a step, and drawing a short dagger from his belt, he offered its hilt to her grasp. A wild apostrophe of astonishment, accompanied by a mystic smile, was Jacqueline's answer, as she snatched the weapon and flung it aside. Then, wrenching open the clasp, which fastened the girdle round her waist, she threw it with both arms round her lover's neck—and then—draw close your veil, spirit of modern prudery! turn quick aside, essence of mock discretion!—then did our heroine freely fling herself into

his embraces, and sob and weep, in the outburst of as holy a passion as ever sanctified mortal bosom.

A loud clapping of hard palms—a crash of laughter, such as a sportive hyena might have laughed on witnessing the embrace of Endymion and Diana in the forest—and a chuckling utterance of "'Tis good! 'tis good! 'tis good!" with all the glee of an enraptured Hollander, were the sounds that aroused the too happy pair from their ecstasy. But before they could break away from their fast-locked enthralment, old Ludwick burst open the inner door of the small semicircular vestibule in which this scene was enacted, and exposed to view the spacious and lofty entrance-hall to the castle, so furnished and filled as to make Jacqueline cling closer and closer to the living stem, round which she twined, as though truth, shelter, and conviction were to be found there and there alone.

CHAPTER XI.

WITHIN the hall was assembled a number, which, in its comparatively confined extent, seemed a host, of armed men—knights furnished at all points, squires bearing lances, swords, and helms; pages with banners, shields, and war-harness; all in fact that could be combined of martial preparation, to give force to a spectacle purposely arranged for effect. The walls were hung with flags of many a brilliant hue and ingenious device, joined together with festoons of Jacqueline's peculiar colours, blue and white; and intermixed with all were decorations of verdant willow branches, while in every vacant space was written, in broad characters,

U

DIENAAR;

the whole offering an emblematical vow of service and fidelity to the cause it typified.

No sooner did Van Monfoort throw open the folding doors, and display Jacqueline in the very act of her personal and most plenary pledge, to what they had all laboured for, and all expected, than a loud cry of enthusiasm burst from the assembled chiefs, and shout upon shout made the walls ring with reverberations of her name. Aroused to the full observance of the scene, she looked and listened almost aghast, at a sight so undreamt-of, and so wild, in what had just before appeared the very centre of solitude, and at that instant only seemed fitting for the silent mysteries of love. Many a strange face caught her wandering gaze, but it was also fixed on that of many stanch adherents familiar to her memory, and pledged to her cause by innumerable proofs. Among these, were William da Brederode, Theodoric de Merwede, Spiering, Ælberg, and several others. But he, whose presence most surprised, and at the same

time most pleased her, was Rudolf Van Diepenholt, dressed in all the pomp of full canonicles, with mitre on head, and crozier in hand, to give the weight and sanction of religion to the holy cause, which his associates had sworn to forward at the sword's point. He stood at the upper end of the hall, on a somewhat elevated platform, and when the mass of warriors opened out to give his person fully to Jacqueline's view, he raised his hands in the gesture of prayer, and poured out a short extemporaneous blessing of animating eloquence on Jacqueline and her cause. The pious fervour of her champions was raised still higher by this. It could not be suppressed by any rules of commonplace etiquette. Without distinctions of rank or thoughts of precedence, they thronged round their reinstalled sovereign; and a scene took place somewhat similar, but still more inspiring, inasmuch as it was more unlooked-for by her, and far more perilous to her friends, than that of the jay-shooting of Tergoes.

And in the midst of this intoxicating tumult, she gave a retrospective regret to the many

brave men who had there been pledged, and had since fallen in her hitherto hapless cause; and even now an involuntary shudder checked the flow of her delight, in dread lest she was committing all that was dearest to her heart in the dark fate that seemed to rule her life.

When the animation of the scene subsided, and explanations of all that was strange, which, indeed, included every thing that she saw, were given to Jacqueline, Vrank—for so we love still to call him in preference to any of his titles —took her hand to lead her to the banqueting-room, where a fitting repast was prepared, on the best scale that the half-furnished state of the castle allowed. This, however, was very insufficient to the due accommodation of so many guests as were now brought together; for, even when the place was regularly inhabited by the foresters or wood-wardens, no chance of such a party was ever provided for. Of eatables there was quite enough—of drink an abundant store—but table conveniences were lamentably deficient. Many a brace of high-born barons, or knights well-known to fame, ate off the same

plate on this occasion, but when it came to the drinking part of the feast that arrangement could not hold good. To supply each man with a vessel of some sort for the quaffing of his liquor—wine, hydromel, or other cordials for the many thirsty palates—was an absolute necessity. The whole store of glass-goblet and drinking horn was displayed, but fell far short of the numbers of the guests. The ready invention of the Count of Ostervent was not at fault in this dilemma. Not venturing to purchase at Leyden a quantity which must have excited suspicion there, he had the night before ordered some of his varlets to prepare for the morning feast a supply of suitably sized pitchers, formed of the yellowish gray clay which surrounded the castle, and which was used for such purposes by the potters of the neighbouring towns. These but half-baked, and consequently still imperfectly dry, were, however, admirably suited to the thirsty and not overnice company. Beside each man was placed a pitcher, where goblet or horn was deficient; and each, as he raised his vessel to his head, left the print of his thumb and fingers deep in

the sides. These marks were, however, made but *once*, for the custom of the days required that after emptying his vessel for the toast to which he pledged, each wassailer should instantly fling it away, nor do dishonour to the subject, by mixing even the dregs of the liquor with any that should be dedicate to another.

And the very first toast now proposed by the stadtholder, and for which every goblet, horn, and pitcher was filled brimming up, was, as may be divined, in honour of her, to whom politically, as well as personally, he had devoted himself, and to whose cause every man present was equally sworn. We need scarcely describe the enthusiasm inspired by this fresh mention of her name; nor is it necessary to vouch that every thirsty enthusiast saw the bottom of his caniken dry, ere he took it from his lips.

"Throw wide the casements! and let each man follow my example, in doing eternal honour to the toast we have pledged!" exclaimed Van Borselen, rising from his seat, and approaching the windows which were all opened at his bidding.

"There!" continued he, flinging his glass, a curious and valuable one,* from the window into the deep-filled moat, that flowed close under the building at its eastern side—"there! let no pollution of fermented liquid ever stain again the vessel sanctified by such a toast, but let it lie to all ages, in the element fit to shrine vessel so purified!"

This high-flown sentiment was echoed by the rest, and the example followed; every other vessel, which had been so honoured, being flung

* A glass, which I am well disposed to believe identical with this, is still preserved, and forms one of a beautiful and unique collection formed by Lady Bagot, the British ambassadress at the Hague. It is of that kind which was used at Friesland, long previous to the period of this tale, at banquets given in honour of affianced or newly married lovers. It is tankard-shaped, with a handle and lid. On one segment, for we cannot say side, is painted, rudely enough, the figure of a young man, whose ruddy face, red hair, blue hose, green hat, and rakish air, prove him to be a gay bridegroom, jovially pledging to his mistress—for he holds a cup in one hand, while the other is stuck a-kimbo. And on the reverse, is the fair model of a Frison maiden, broad-set, flat-faced, and leering under a profusion of yellow locks, in red kirtle, and light blue boddice, her left hand grasping a garland, and her right opened out towards her lover, and only separated from his by the green and yellow leaves of a dubious looking daffy-down-dilly.

into the moat, albeit that some of them were doomed to stick for many a cycle in the mud at the bottom of the water. Thence they have been one by one extracted at various epochs since, and preserved with the glass itself; interesting relics to mere antiquaries, and more so still to enthusiasts, who have imagined a fable of Jacqueline having been the maker of these now classical pitchers, and who fancy in the rough finger-prints on their sides, the very pressure of her delicate hand, as a genuine mint-mark to stamp their value with posterity.

We cannot enter in detail on the important business of those explanations which Vrank Van Borselen undertook; firstly, in his proper character under that name; secondly, in his hereditary title, as Heer Borselen of Eversdyke, and thirdly, in his newly acquired dignity as Count of Ostervent. All that is essential for our reader's information is his absolute conviction of Jacqueline's innocence from all the charges which had weighed so heavily against her, a conviction arising from the minutest inquiries on every point which compromised

her reputation. Ludwick Van Monfoort had mainly contributed to let in the light of truth on his mind on these questions. It is of no moment to the object of our tale to relate how he made known to Van Borselen his forgetfulness of all animosity on public ground, and the growth of his personal regard. They soon came together by previous consent as friends; and when they separated again for purposes of reciprocal good, it was as conspirators. The atrocious accusations of Giles Postel were swept away; the charge of Jacqueline's complicity with John Chevalier, disproved by the production of his dying confession, which did her justice in the most exalted terms, her true situation as to Glocester and Fitz-walter was made clear as day. The evident wrong done her by Philip of Burgundy's usurpation, even after her wretched husband's death, when not even the shadow of such a claim as his existed, was too glaring to require the magnifying lens of Van Monfoort's eloquence. All, in short, combined to throw Van Borselen fully and fervently into

the designs formed for her re-establishment in dominion; and, his deep-rooted attachment being now unrestrained by any obstacle of moral tendency or religious tie, he entered into the grand scheme which, ostensibly tending but to Jacqueline's happiness, involved the most important efforts for his own.

There are periods in which the recorder as well as the reader of adventures, like these, requires repose. Mutual allowance should be made by the two parties concerned. We now approach the conclusion of our story; and as we have on many occasions, during our progress, repressed, or cut short, many tempting digressions, we now claim indulgence for any apparent omission, having still to relate eventful—the most eventful—incidents of our heroine's fate. We feel sensible of the embarrassment of maintaining well the connected interest of a recital, which should neither lag nor hurry on, neither become prolix nor confused; and craving the patience of our co-partners in the task of getting through the work, we beg them to excuse all imperfections, incidental to its

execution at this critical period. Much, therefore, we leave to their own imagining of Jacqueline's and Van Borselen's unbounded delight, in their present re-union as lovers, and in their reciprocal hopes—she, as a re-instated sovereign, he, as the most distinguished of her subjects, to whom she paid back political fealty and homage with her heart's most deep devotion. The wild expression of her long-repressed sensations, and the unrestrained enthusiasm of his hitherto reserved and serious character, gave a totally new turn to their habits of thought and action; and shewed them to each other and to themselves, in an aspect as extraordinary as it was exquisite.

The full extent of their enjoyments we may not penetrate—the whole of their perilous imprudence we must not tell. Let it suffice that they abandoned themselves, their cause, their friends, their country—all, for the intoxicating rapture of the heart; and it will be soon seen what penalty they paid for the delirious happiness, to which reason brought no control, nor conscience a reproach.

After a few days of secret council and well-digested plans, the various confederates disappeared from Teylingen, which resumed all its wonted solitude of appearance; the small retinue of the stadtholder during this flying visit being but specks in the atmosphere of its loneliness. Even they, too, were in a little while removed to his castle of Zuylen, on the river Vecht, within a league of Utrecht. It was, like Teylingen, a building of great antiquity, which had come into the family of Borselen by marriage, and was at this period used by him as his principal residence in Holland. There he himself retired, after his ostensible purpose of his forest inspection was finished. But he did not retire there quite alone! Nor, when unaccompanied, were his days and nights passed in the unsocial gloom of such a retreat. The truth, in fact, must out; at least as much of it as was apparent at the time, or could be sifted by the close observers, whose pleasure or business it was to scrutinize every act, word, or look of the Count of Ostervent, in relation to his renewed intercourse with Countess Jacqueline.

Frequently, then, was it said, the figure of the count was seen rapidly moving through the forest at twilight, in the close neighbourhood of the Hague; and while a varlet with a led horse was remarked loitering about the outskirts in the dawn, having passed the night no one knew where, the same figure used to return on its previous path with a slow and unwilling movement, in wide contrast to the elastic pace of the preceding evening. Whispers had even gone abroad, that a cloak-covered man of the same height as the stadtholder, was more than once observed by moonlight entering the low door of the palace-turret; and when the women of the establishment remarked at morning to old Gobelin the strange noises which had disturbed their sleep, he used to give them angry reproofs, observing, that, "it was hard if the ghosts of the old counts and countesses of Holland might not be allowed to amuse themselves, by occasional gambols in the chambers of their own palace!"

But this was not all. The numerous train of domestics at Zuylen, made no secret of avowing

that Countess Jacqueline and her old confident, came many a time there on horseback after dusk, and that in spite of her precautions she was observed walking in the gardens with the stadtholder, in all the imprudent exposure of false security. And then her stolen visits to Teylingen on various pretexts—and the marvellous coincidence of his excursions in that direction—and—but need we multiply proofs of all that brought conviction to the public mind? or make our pages, like those of history on this occasion, a scandalous chronicle? No! We admit all the facts—make no defence—and leave the character, the motives, and the morals of our heroine, wholly at our reader's mercy.

It was not possible that Duke Philip of Burgundy should have remained long ignorant of what was notorious to all Jacqueline's enemies, the regret of most of her friends, and the common talk of the country. Among the many who knew of her almost public meeting with the stadtholder at Teylingen, was it to be expected that all were invulnerable to corruption? or supposing that very improbable case, ought

it to have been looked for that none of the sordid beings, who watched the suspected and dreaded victim of their employer, could fail to detect the ill-kept secret? Avarice was not certainly in those days, before commercial selfishness extinguished martial generosity, the besetting sin of the Dutch character. The frank and cordial nature of the times coloured the customs of the people. Yet amidst the honest fidelity which distinguished them, one instance of sordid treachery crept in; as a rare occasion of hospitality may, at times, be in our days detected, varying the unsocial exclusion, which so disfigures the better parts of the now national mind.

One day, in the very midst of that inconsiderate abandonment to bliss, which we have striven to describe, a special messenger reached the castle of Zuylen, summoning the stadtholder, in the name of his liege lord, Duke Philip of Burgundy, to repair on the spot to Russelmonde, there to receive a communication from its governor, the redoubted John Vilain, on a state affair of the utmost importance.

This was a circumstance of startling difficulty. In another week the general insurrection was to have broken out. But it would have been most hazardous to hurry it on now, in consequence of this surprise, it being impossible to communicate with the various chiefs of the confederates in sufficient time to change the previously settled plan. Yet such was Jacqueline's advice. Urged by two impulses—her personal courage, and her woman's fears for him she loved—she thought it better to brave the risk of an immediate revolt than to trust the person of Van Borselen in Philip's hands. This opinion, however strongly urged, was more strongly combated, and finally overpowered by Van Borselen. He argued that any rashness might lead to ruin; that Philip had given him no proof of suspicion; that he was not himself at Russelmonde; and that an obedience to his mandate would at once disarm any lurking doubt, or remove any sinister impressions. But the secret feeling that prompted this reasoning existed in the fact of that passion which, by a strange anomaly in sensation, urges men to deeds of danger, and blinds them

to the risks, which may snatch them for ever from the object that alone gives value to life, and in the very time that the object is most worth living for.

Jacqueline found opposition useless, and submitted to the stadtholder's decision with a pang of dismal foreboding, too well founded, as shall be presently seen.

Van Borselen, without the slightest shew of hesitation, prepared for his journey; and as soon as the duke's messenger was refreshed, and a suitable escort equipped, he was on the road towards Flanders, duly attended, and burning with impatience to know the import of the affair which had thus broken on his brief season of delight, and frustrated the plans meant to make it eternal. He never slept, and scarcely ate, till he reached the castle of Russelmonde, which stood on the banks of the Scheldt, the walls being washed by the river at one side, and the other being strongly defended by ramparts, and the natural protection of a deep ravine that made the place, while its occupiers had the command of the river, almost impregnable.

But Vrank lost no time in examination of the the fortress. Love dims the vision of the keenest military eye, and adds new activity to the most vigorous limbs. So it was on this occasion, at least; for Vrank scarcely saw the peculiarities of the place, into which he entered with a rapidity of motion that kept his followers on the stretch, and astonished those by whom he was received—for John Vilain and his garrison marvelled at his want of suspicion of what they knew so well, namely, that the Count of Ostervent was a state prisoner the moment he crossed the castle-moat.

This intelligence was conveyed to him by the governor in no phrase of measured courtesy, but with the blunt and somewhat brutal tone of triumph, which so coarse a mind as John Vilain's might feel, at getting fast hold of a criminal who had once before escaped from his gripe. Never did so full a sense of his own rash confidence strike on mortal man with more force than that which overwhelmed Van Borselen. Few of his thoughts were given to personal concern—but he pictured the anguish of Jacque-

line in this new trial, and he was irresistibly impressed with her own belief, that the fatality which pursued her extended its baneful influence on all connected with her. Still he gloried in the cause, for which he had lived an enthusiast, and was now prepared to die a martyr.

The very morning after his arrival, John Vilain entered the room appropriated to his use, and in the discomfort of which he had passed a night of much misery.

"Count Ostervent," said the governor, with a disturbed and gloomy air, "I am forced to communicate to you an order just received from his highness the Duke of Burgundy."

"Be seated, governor; calm your perturbation, and read—I am prepared for the contents."

"Well, then—thus it runs," resumed Vilain, recovering his composure a little, taking breath, and reading from the scroll. "'We, Philip, Duke of Burgundy, Count of Artois, Namur, and Hainault,—Renvart of Holland, Zealand, and Friesland—' By St. Michael, and as I am a true knight, I cannot go on!—I must cut it

short, count—it is an order to put you instantly to death !"

In other circumstances the unfortunate prisoner might have smiled at the sensitive delicacy that boggled at the preamble, but made no hesitation in thundering forth the terrible announcement contained in the body of the sentence. As it was, he was for the moment horror-stricken. He had braved death many a time, and could do so manfully again and again, arms in his hands, with his blood up, and his honour untainted, but to die a traitor's death, in the silent ignominy of a prison, was a frightful contemplation, made tenfold more so by the idea of such a separation from her he adored. The anguish of that moment was surely more than ample expiation for all the faults and misdemeanours of an ordinary sinner—and Vrank Borselen was certainly not more than that. But his natural courage and self-command prevailed quickly over this passing suffering. He summoned up all his resolution and presence of mind, and with the fast-clinging love of life, he said,

"This is indeed abrupt ! Is the order under Philip's own hand ?"

"Ay, Count, too surely so," said Vilain.

"It trembled when it signed so cruel a sentence, good governor!"

"It is not used to tremble, Count Ostervent."

"Nor are you, valiant knight—yet your hand shakes, and your lip quivers while you merely read the scroll. How then must remorse work in *his* heart, who signed such a warrant against the life of a man unheard in his own defence? Think you not, governor, that he would thank the man who saved his conscience from such remorse, and gave him time to reflect twice on such a matter? Would he not hold himself better served by disobedience than by a too prompt compliance? Where is the duke?"

"At Ghent—I must myself bring him the news of your death—such is my private instruction."

"And can you, brave knight, perform this harsh office, and send a man in the very spring of youth, and known like yourself to honourable fame, to his last account, torn from all he holds dear in life, and unprepared for death?"

"The saints forbid! No, count, the castle almoner is ready in the next cell, to shrive you, while the headsman prepares you for the block, and I myself will take charge of any message to your friends."

"Good governor, is this enough! Is this all the time you grant me, to make my peace with Heaven, and settle my worldly affairs?"

"Many a brave man, noble count, gets less on the battle-field."

"Ay, governor, but these men are prepared for their fate—they court death in a glorious cause, and die like heroes in the broad eye of fame—but it is far different when the stroke falls suddenly like this, and the severed head is held up in felon infamy? Remember also, governor—"

"Count Ostervent, my orders are positive and peremptory."

"Then I can make no further appeal—I scorn to become a beggar even for my life—but I see your emotion."

"Do you? Then I *must* cut the matter short—count, we—that is to say the priest, the

executioner and myself—are all ready. I trust you bear *me* no ill will?"

As Vilain uttered these words he opened the door; and Vrank saw in the adjoining room the awful accompaniments of death, indeed all ready—a priest, in his cassock and book in hand, a grim ruffian holding an axe, some half-dozen armed guards, and a small wooden block, on which an assistant was placing a black cloth with one hand, while he held a basket with the other.

Vrank started back and stood still, gaping at this dreadful apparatus. The bold heart that would have swelled and bounded at the sight of legioned hosts sank and collapsed at a spectacle like this. Whether the victim grew red or pale, whether his limbs shook or his teeth chattered, we neither know nor care. He had been less than man were he unaffected by such a doom—yet worse than craven had he not been able to meet it as a man ought to do. He looked for some seconds on the scene, then suddenly threw his eyes to Heaven—placed his hands on his breast—and then, heaving one

deep sigh, as if of farewell to the world, he calmly turned towards the governor and said,

"I am now quite, *quite* ready."

But if he was, or fancied himself so, it seemed as though the governor were not. He in his turn gazed for some moments on the hideous tranquillity of the preparations outside the cell, and a desperate internal conflict was evident in the workings of his coarse features. His stern frown, fixed teeth, projecting under lip, clenched hands, and rigid attitude, proved eloquently that he was not a mere brutal executor of a tyrant's will, but as humane as he was brave, though neither quality were adorned with the graceful attributes which add so much to their value in more refined possessors. But what could be expected from this rude soldier, when a sense of duty combated his mutinous misgivings?

"No, no—I cannot do it! Follow me. count!" exclaimed he—and he led the way into the outer room. Van Borselen followed him with a firm step; and no sooner were they inside than the headsman advanced towards

them, the priest began to mutter the death-prayer, the guards stood to their arms, and the door was closed by the attendant.

About the same hour on the following morning Philip of Burgundy was pacing one of the broad galleries of his palace in the city of Ghent—the same which Jacqueline of Holland had often and often walked in, during her three months' imprisonment not two years before; and from which she had, to his great anger at the time, effected her escape. Philip had few hours free from care, and this was not one of them. Ambition's votaries can seldom give a holiday to thought; much less one who was, like Duke Philip, so steeped in the guilt of spoliation and oppression. Poor though the solace be to suffering humanity, and insufficient as is the penalty thus paid by the oppressor, it is still sweet to know that his triumph is not unalloyed by remorse, and that his hours of solitude are not hours of rest. Imagination, whose angel-visits brighten the virtuous mind, haunts him like a fiend. The blood of the brave thousands crushed by his artillery's

wheels rises up before him in suffocating fumes —the shrieks of dying men, despairing women, and orphaned children ring in his brain—the curse of the generous weighs him down—the brand of history is ready to sear his name—and the fear of the grave makes the boldest tyrant start and thrill with horror. We know not that Philip's acts deserve this extent of expression. It is perhaps prompted by deeds done in the days in which we live, rather than in those of which we write. The crimes of earlier ages may find mercy, in consideration of the darkness of the moral atmosphere in which men walked and erred. But nothing restrains us now from execrating the throned wretch, wilfully blind to the broad blaze of civilized truth, who tramples on his kind, and grows saturate with the best blood of freedom.

Philip walked apart from the attendants of his train. He displayed more than ordinary anxiety. He was now a far different man, in seeming and in every-day habits, from what he was when we shewed him to our readers in the tilt-yard of Hesdin. His personal quarrel with Glocester had been long since set at rest, by

the decision of the council at Paris, which declared there was no cause of combat between them. His "customs of exercise" were consequently given up; and with them much of that buoyancy of spirit and manner by which he had been distinguished. The protracted troubles of Holland and the success of his usurpation had brought him daily anxiety, and it is to be hoped remorse; while instead of fêtes and tournaments, excursions to Paris, and the inspiring variety of his former life, his time was consumed in negociations with refractory towns, in sifting conspiracies, and consolidating his new acquirements by every art of unworthy chicanery.

"The Governor of Russelmonde is arrived post-haste, and waits outside for your highness's commands," said the officer next in attendance on Philip's person, approaching a few steps towards his line of promenade.

"Already!" exclaimed the duke, with an impatient and almost furious start, and a stamp on the floor that made the gallery ring. "Oh! this is the curse of power, to find ever at hand

tools over anxious to do its most hasty bidding! Let Vilain attend me in my closet!"

With the utterance of this sentiment, (which might have been either the momentary remorse of a man really in a passion, or the affected moderation of pretence,) he quitted the gallery; and in a few moments afterwards the Governor of Russelmonde entered his private closet, and stood silently before him.

"Well, John Vilain, why do you not speak? Why stand with that hangman's look, and force me to question you? Is he dead?"

"Needs your highness to ask that question? Dared I disobey your orders?"

"Prithee, good friend, answer me at once. Is he dead?"

"He is, may it please your highness; the Count of Ostervent died a traitor's death yester-morn."

At these words, Philip seemed overwhelmed with grief. "Dead!" exclaimed he, perturbedly pacing the floor. "Dead, and as a traitor too! The gallant and noble stem of the Borselens, the flower of chivalry—oh, John, John! what

have you done? And I, why did I not wait for proof? why not let them consummate the marriage that would have sealed the forfeiture of all her dominions? Oh, John Vilain, my trusty but imprudent friend, we have been too hasty!"

Had Philip's sorrow been merely for the sudden death of a suspected vassal, John Vilain might have perhaps calculated on its passing over without any very violent effect. But the latter part of the duke's speech revealed other motives, which made his regret for this summary execution more likely to sink deep. Seizing on this symptom, Vilain said, in a tone of supplication and doubt,

"Does then, indeed, your highness lament the fate of this young man? Would you that he still lived?"

"Would I? Ay, by my halidame at the price of a province! I have too much blood on my hand already, Vilain; and had Borselen lived to marry Jacqueline, as he no doubt would have done but for my angry mandate and your sanguinary zeal, three earldoms had been mine. Would I that he still lived? Ah, John, John, what have I gained by his death?"

"Gained nought, nor yet lost by it, my gracious master," cried Vilain, dropping on his knee; "Van Borselen lives—I have over-held his sentence—if disobedience merits death, take my head—I am ready for the block."

"He lives, he lives! ha, ha! ha! ha!" exclaimed Philip, laughing hysterically, "he does? You are sure, John? you said just now he was dead—which must I believe?"

"Noble duke, he lives as surely as I kneel before you," replied Vilain, looking up in the smiling face of the duke, who held him by both shoulders, and joyously shook him.

"My worthy John, I am sorry I once knighted thee, that I cannot dub thee now; but here, take this in token of my love; this is the third time thou hast given me my life!"

While he spoke he flung a richly gemmed baldrick, and the sword it carried, over Vilain's head; but before he let it quite rest on his shoulder he added, in a doubtful tone—

"You hold him safe? He is secure?"

"In one of the deepest and dampest dungeons, so it please your highness."

"Then it does not please my highness, good John. Deep and damp! No, no, John—we must keep him high and dry. We must not risk ague or rheumatism to so precious a deposit for Jacqueline's ruin! Go, go, Vilain, ride fast and stop not on your road. Bring him up to your own apartments—feed him well—treat him nobly—he is a valiant knight, Vilain, and of a thick-blooded race that requires comfort and good cheer. The *dampest* dungeon! John, John, it gives me a cold fit but to think of it! Away, away! I shall soon follow thee, with a sufficient force to guard the castle from surprise."

CHAPTER XII.

The Governor of Russelmonde hastened back to the fortress, from better feelings than mere anxiety to save his prisoner from an ague. He longed to snatch him from the terrible suspense in which he lingered, and to have the satisfaction of assuring him of his life's safety. He hurried therefore to Van Borselen's dungeon, which was truly what he had described it to Philip; both the captive and the jailor having agreed that the utmost secrecy was necessary as to his existence until the doubtful experiment on Philip's feelings was well gone through, the failure of which would assuredly have caused Vrank's prompt and silent execution on John Vilain's return from Ghent.

"Well, governor, well?" exclaimed Vrank, as Vilain entered the cell, and flung himself half breathless on the miserable bed which for two days had been the prisoner's resting place.

"What am I to expect or prepare for?" continued he, receiving, instead of an answer, only a convulsive squeeze of one of his hands in the governor's vice-like grasp.

"It is then all over!" said Vrank. "Oh, why did I not die at once? Why linger through these two days of desperate hope?"

"Wait a bit, wait a bit," said Vilain; "Count, give me that pitcher—by Heaven, there is something sticking in my throat.—I am choking!"

Van Borselen, alarmed at the broken and gurgling voice which confirmed this announcement, handed the pitcher to the governor. The latter gulped down a large draught of the water it contained, and then said—

"Ay, I am better now—I can speak without blubbering. And now let me ask you, count, do you think if I had bad news to tell that I would keep you lingering? No, by St. An-

drew ! I would have come in with James Brockman by my side, and he should have struck off your head without a moment's notice. No, count, I am not the man to do you or any other gallant knight an unkind or indelicate turn. Your life is safe—the duke has granted it—but I fear it is coupled with a devilish hard condition for any independent man—I much doubt but he will insist on your marrying."

" Your life is safe," were words of such sweet sound, that Van Borselen must be pardoned if all that preceded or followed them were forgotten or unheard. Yet he did not betray any unseemly rapture, for a true knight of chivalry would have been as much disgraced by shewing joy at escape from death, as at fear for condemnation to it. Vrank therefore heard the good news with a decent delight; and only smiled when John Vilain explained to him, in profound secrecy, that he was certain Duke Philip was bent on forcing him to marry Countess Jacqueline. The removal from the cell below to the chamber above was quickly effected; and the qualifying condition of pardon, so pathetically

deplored by John Vilain, was not likely to cause any very great drawback to Vrank Van Borselen's satisfaction.

But few hours had elapsed after this pleasant change in the situation of the latter, when a circumstance, not quite unlooked-for by him, altered the tenor of his treatment once more, and while holding out a prospect of relief, was in reality plunging him in greater peril than before. This was the appearance of several hostile vessels, filled with soldiers, on the river, and bearing up towards the castle, while a body of armed troops were seen approaching it on the landward side.

John Vilain was too good a soldier to be taken quite by surprise. He had been, previously to Vrank's detention, led to expect some outburst of revolt in the provinces of Holland and Zealand, but he did not calculate on their affecting him. But he now saw very clearly from his ramparts that the banner of Burgundy was not flying on the approaching vessels, while the old flag of Holland waved from the mast's head, as well as one with the new colours,

so romantically and gallantly adopted by Van Monfoort for Jacqueline's peculiar distinction. No sooner was the governor satisfied that an attack on his fortress was intended by the incoming squadron, and that the release of Van Borselen could be alone its object, than his decision was taken: namely, to defend himself to the last, to blow himself, his garrison, and castle into the air when resistance became hopeless; but long ere matters came to that extremity, to chop off the head of his prisoner, and so obviate any possible chance of his escape, or reproach to himself.

This decision he communicated to Van Borselen, in conformity with his peculiar notions of candour and delicacy; and the first proofs of his sincerity consisted in loading him with chains, and removing him again to his dungeon, where he waited with such feelings of agitation as may be imagined, during the interval occupied in the fast following transactions.

To John Vilain's great comfort, the troops which approached him by land turned out to be a reinforcement of some hunded men headed by

the Duke of Burgundy himself. They entered the castle, unseen from the ships, which were bearing up the river, and were so distributed as to be ready for immediate display to those who might mean to assail the place, and convince them that they were deceived in reckoning on a faint resistance from an insufficient garrison. Almost at the same instant that Philip reached the gates, a small escort approached from another direction, conducting a prisoner, who of all those against whom his crafty efforts were directed, was, next to Van Borselen, the man he most wished to get into his power. It was no other than Rudolf Van Diepenholt, the Bishop of Utretcht, who had incautiously suffered himself to be entrapped by some of Philip's emissaries, and now arrived at Russelmonde, to make one item in that total of miraculous success which seemed in this, as in all other matters, to crown Philip's plans.

A short interview between the bishop and the Duke sufficed to inform the former that much, but by no means all, of his proceedings, in conjunction with Jacqueline and Borselen, were

discovered. He was not a man of many words, where words are of little avail; and neither risked commmitting nor degrading himself unnecessarily. He therefore submitted to Philip's reproaches without reply, and to his threats without remonstrance, and calmly waited the issue of his fate. But he was not treated with any very heavy indignity by the Duke, who had other designs than the needless humiliation of his victims. He would, in fact, have instantly ordered Van Borelen's chains to be struck off, had he not had an object in view for almost immediate effect, requiring the appearance of these shackles to complete a somewhat melodramatic, but strictly historical combination.

Philip calculated correctly that Jacqueline herself was on board one of the vessels which now came so gallantly on with a full tide, in all the pride of hazardous and inspiring enterprize. She had not lost one moment, after Van Borselen's departure from Zeylen, in getting together with all haste such a body of troops as she and her faithful counsellor, Van Monfoort, considered amply sufficient to surprise the isolated

castles, to which her forebodings told her Van Borselen was inveigled only for the disgrace and danger of imprisonment, or perhaps for death itself. Two or three hundred picked men with some pieces of ordnance were secretly collected by Van Monfoort and De Brederode, and put on board three trading vessels, which lay ready for the use of the confederates close to one of the islands of the Scheldt; and they safely passed Antwerp without detection, and sailed up the river till they came to its confluence with the Nerth, nearly opposite to which stood Russelmonde. They were no sooner there than the cannons were mounted on the decks; and the bustle incident to this proceeding betraying their hostile views, the colours of Holland and of Jacqueline's cause were boldly hoisted, the soldiers prepared for a prompt landing and immediate assault, and every appearance of vigour assumed, which was likely to strike terror into a feebled and ill-garrisoned place, such as they had certain information that Russelmonde was.

While the two largest of the vessels, under the command of De Brederode, took up a

position in front of the castle, laying their broadsides close, to bear upon it with the whole force of the artillery, Jacqueline caused the other to approach the shore; and disembarking, with Van Monfoort and forty cavaliers, she mounted her horse, the beautiful animal received so lately from her mother, and placing herself at the head of the troop, rode briskly up to the raised drawbridge, that joined the castle-gate, for the purpose of summoning the place to surrender.

Had the Duke of Burgundy been desirous of Jacqueline's total destruction, he might with great ease have sallied forth and accomplished such a catastrophe; but he most probably shrunk before the odium of so terrible a measure, joining the power of tyranny with the craft of tactics. Instead therefore of repulsing the threatened attack, he chose to parley; and, to Jacqueline's infinite astonishment, he answered her trumpeter's summons by himself appearing on the walls, while at the same instant some hundreds of warriors darted up their helmed heads and brandished spears, swords, and portable missiles of all arms above the battlements.

Jacqueline's heart sunk with terror—not for herself, but from the force of the passion which had previously inspired her energies, and now made them wither under the blighting touch of despair. Had Van Borselen not been the sole object of her thoughts, Philip and his armed soldiers had only excited her indignant courage. But thinking of him alone, she passed over all the gradations of surprise and confusion, which Philip's apparition must so naturally have excited, and she came at once to the point of absorbing interest which it involved. In a voice scarcely articulate, and barely audible in the small open gallery, which hung above the gate for the purposes of parley, she exclaimed,

"Oh, Philip, is he safe? Tell me, in mercy, by your earthly triumphs, and your hopes of Heaven, tell me, does Van Borselen yet live?"

"God's patience! Is it *you*, fair cousin, that gives us this greeting?" replied Philip, in a loud voice, and ironical tone, which excited considerable merriment among the officers by his side, and roused Van Monfoort and the rest of Jacqueline's escort to the height of fury.

"You, that come so far to do honour to our presence in this poor place of Russelmonde? Why, how is this? Does the grand master of the forests come to give an account of his trust to the Ruward, in right of his liege lady, the Countess of Holland? So nobly tended too! Some half hundred harnessed cavaliers, and three battle-ships, well filled with fighting men, instead of the common train of a dozen dingy foresters, in russet doublets, and carrying clumsy pole-axes!"

"Oh, Philip! for the sake of the Virgin, and thy holy patron, St. Andrew, answer me—I sink, I faint from dread! Does he live?"

"What then! Is this, after all, a visit not of courtesy to us, but of inquiry after the noble stadtholder, the valiant Count Ostervent, the Kabblejaw chief? By my patron, whom you invoke, fair cousin, who may have inspired you with this charity for your old enemy—and the Virgin, who, I much fear me, has not served for your model in chastity, I swear that this moves my wonder!"

"Devils of hell! Why have I not a bow or

arquebuss to send a shaft or shot against the insolent tyrant!" exclaimed Van Monfoort, as he placed one arm round Jacqueline's waist, seeing that she was drooping, and almost sinking in her seat, while with the other outstretched, he shook all the anger of a clenched fist in the direction of Philip's position. This imprudence roused Jacqueline to a sense of the danger of exciting the duke's rage, and revived her more than the best-directed efforts of prudence or reasoning could have done.

"Philip!" she cried once more, but in tones expressing desperation rather than exhaustion, "this torture is terrible—I can endure no more. Answer me, does he live? Answer quick and clear, or by Heaven's host I plunge headlong into this deep fosse—and my blood be on thy head!"

She rose up in her seat as she spoke, and holding her reins high in both hands, the noble animal, who had learned to obey her slightest touch, raised his forelegs, and was on the point of bounding across the low parapet that skirted the ditch. Van Monfoort was thrown on one

side and nearly unhorsed, by the prompt movement of Jacqueline's palfry—the others of the escort were several paces behind; nothing intervened between her and the fatal plunge, which would have dashed her to pieces on the rocky bottom of the fosse, when Philip, shocked at the horrid catastrophe so threatened, and which Jacqueline's wild air and tone convinced him was certain to follow a protraction of his cruel mockery, almost threw himself over the balustrade of the little gallery, in his outstretching impatience to stop the desperate result.

"Hold, Jacqueline, hold!" cried he—"He *is* safe—he lives—hold but one moment, and you shall see him safe and well."

Jacqueline instinctively pulled in her palfry, who reared and plunged, in brute impatience at restraint, even though saved by it from destruction. At the same moment Van Borselen was led out by the small door opening from the castle into the gallery; and as he stood, loaded with chains, and gazing down in astonished rapture, that made him forget the presence of this tyrant master, his own peril, and all but her on

whom his looks were riveted, she uttered one of those short wild shrieks of joy, which such scenes, and such only call forth; and viewing at the instant the draw-bridge let down, and the castle gate fly open, she threw herself forward on her palfry's neck, urged him to utmost speed—and he flew rather than galloped across, and disappeared in the gloom of the arched entrance. Before any one of the observers could take breath after this astounding event, the draw-bridge began slowly to rise again, and the ponderous gates to close, moved by unseen persons, who worked the chains and pulleys from within. The sound of the palfry's feet was heard in hollow rattling on the pavement inside: Van Montfoort recovered electrically from his stupified amaze; and darting his spurs into the sides of his steed, Van Borselen's noble gift, he just cleared the draw-bridge, and entered the gate, as the one opened upwards, and rose above the chasm it guarded, and the other closed on its creaking hinges, and was fastened by huge self-shooting bolts.

A loud shout of triumph, and a laugh of

mockery burst from the battlements. The troop which had formed Jacqueline's escort stood for a moment bewildered at the scene—they then, as if by common consent, though not a word of command was given, wheeled away, and made with all speed to the river side, where, as fast as could be, they re-embarked, turning their horses loose in the low pastures, and carrying the strange news, and their own panic on board the little squadron. Within half an hour afterwards, in accordance to a convention between De Brederode and the duke, the former struck both his flags, unarmed his guns, and moored his vessels in peace, if not in friendship, close under the walls of the castle.

It may well be supposed that this eventful half-hour was busily and conclusively employed inside.

The wild joy of Jacqueline and Van Borselen as they stood clasped in each other's arms —the triumph of Philip at the success of the stratagem on which he calculated so well for entrapping our heroine — the fury of Van Monfoort—the grave regret of Diepen-

holt, must all be trusted to the reader's own conception. The consequence of all is quickly told. Philip having now got at once into his power the four individuals most feared by him on earth, and who alone possessed any serious means of opposing his cherished designs of aggrandizement, was enabled to make with each whatever terms he pleased. The first object was to obtain Jacqueline's unconditional abdication of all her rights to Holland, Zealand and Friesland, as the price of Van Borselen's life. No sooner was the proposition made than she signed a short but explicit act, which was ready drawn up for the occasion by one of Philip's secretaries, even while Jacqueline had held parley in front of the castle. This being duly executed, and signed with her seal of state, which was procured from on board the vessel that bore her on her expedition, it might have been expected—and it was perhaps hoped by some of the parties—that generosity would have paid its tardy visit to Philip's breast, and that he would recompense Jacqueline's sacrifices and sufferings, by pro-

posing a marriage between her and the man she so avowedly loved and lived for. Not so. Whatever Philip might have been inclined to do before they fell into his power, for the purposes of selfish ambition, he was now resolved to give no chance for the existence of some future claimant to the dominions secured after such labour and such iniquity for himself and the heirs he looked for. He therefore resolved that both Jacqueline and Borselen should remain his prisoners for ever, in all the anguish of separation, and the blight of singleness. Flanders was the place he destined for their final imprisonment; but before he removed them to that most secure ground of all his possessions, he felt it necessary to have Jacqueline's renunciation of her claims loudly and beyond cavil proclaimed by herself, in the country most materially affected. It was for this purpose that Philip resolved to remove, in the first instance, with his four prisoners, to Dordrecht in Holland, where Zweder Van Culembourg had (under his protection) installed himself, and removed the nominal authority of the see of

Utrecht, which he still persevered in calling his, notwithstanding his ignominious defeat by Van Diepenholt, the chapter, and the citizens.

The surrender of Van Diepenholt's pretensions was also a point of material interest to Philip; as it would relieve him from the constant dread of Jacqueline's most powerful friend, and secure the restoration of his own devoted creature, which, to a sovereign of Philip's stamp was equivalent to a staunch adherent. The double abdication of Jacqueline and Rudolf being thus resolved on, with perpetual confinement in some strong fortress to each of his captives,—for Van Monfoort also was no mean prey nor an enemy to let loose again—the duke determined to set out the next day on his triumphal march for Dordrecht; and he gave such orders as ensured for it every possible demonstration of his own power and the utter humiliation of his prisoners.

We shall pass over a description of this march. It was all that the last written sentence promised. Every disposable cavalry soldier within the fortress or the surrounding canton-

ments swelled the convoy, which was enriched with all the parade of music and banners; and when it reached Antwerp at eve the whole population poured out to gaze on the captives, and make the air ring with shouts of praise in honour of their mighty and magnanimous sovereign.

Another day of easy journeying brought the cortége—now increased to the appearance of a little army—to a second halting-place, a few leagues from Dordrecht; and all was again arranged for the resumption of the march at sunrise the following morning, in order that the public entry into the last-named town should be made early in the day, to give ample room for the ceremonies intended in honour of the occasion.

The events of that momentous day must be recorded in another—and concluding—chapter.

CHAPTER XIII.

Never was morning ushered in by a night more ominously dismal, or a dawn more fearful, than that which now broke over the whole district through which lay the line of march. Darkness had scarcely thrown its pall on the expiring beauties of the preceding day, when a low moaning was heard to sweep across the plains that stretched westward towards the sea. The dashing of the waves against the defences which centuries had scarcely sufficed to form, sounded like ocean's voice, angrily claiming from man the spoils he had after so long a struggle rescued from its dominion. Those who had listened to the rushing tide might well

have shuddered while picturing the early days when the waters rolled for leagues upon the shore, and all that now smiled in culture and wealth, was a waste of swamp and marsh, whose savage occupiers were taught by instinct to raise those mounds and dykes, perfected by civilization, into barriers against the whelming element. And all who listened now might remember how often those barriers had proved insufficient, and fearfully reckon up the inundations which had at intervals desolated the country.

The Duke of Burgundy, and those he conducted, journeyed inland, a few leagues from the great volume of ocean; but several branches of the sea ran up in narrow currents through the dead flat of this district; and the cortége was at times forced to make a sweep round the heads of these salt-lakes, to the eastward of the dykes that kept out their encroachments, or to ride across the strand where the passage was safe and easily effected. Such was more particularly the nature of the country, on this last day's march close up to Dordrecht;

but all the intervals between these occasional interruptions were covered by numerous villages and highly cultivated pastures. It was, in fact, the most populous and wealthiest district of Holland, a notion of which may be imagined by the traveller who sees the *Payes de Waes*, in Flanders, at this day.

The sound of wailing, at first sent forward by the westward, at sunset on the evening of the second halt, was soon followed by irregular gusts that spoke the rising wrath of the storm. Flights of wild-fowl, and sea-birds that rarely sought the shore, were faintly seen in the twilight, or heard in the fast-coming gloom, sweeping with outstretched wings before the blast—their shrill screams mixing at times with its whistling voice, or varying its hoarse and hollow tones.

Hour after hour the tempest grew louder and stronger. The sea rose with the increasing wind, and the natural roar of the billows made fierce harmony with the awful echoing of their splash against the dykes. No mortal closed an eye in sleep that night throughout the popu-

lous tract we describe, save the worn victims of disease, and even they must have touched close on the extinction of life, who were not roused by terror at the elemental war.

At day-break the storm was at its height. The desolate look of earth was in keeping with the dull gray of the sky, and the muddy foam which rose on the turbid waters. Fear seemed to have seized on every living thing. The people were all abroad. Some were seen exerting their utmost energy in repairing and strengthening the dykes, wherever the slightest symptom of failure was perceived. Others drove the cattle into shelter, while the plaintive lowing of cows and the timid bleat of sheep spoke the subduing influence of the general alarm. The sun at length rose, not in dazzling brightness, or through an atmosphere of many-coloured tints, all tinged with golden radiance—but with red, dull and bloated disk, like some drunken reveller slowly rising through the fumes of a debauch.

The stern heart of Philip of Burgundy did not quail at these symptoms of evil omen, which might have persuaded a more superstitious man

that Heaven was wrathful at his iniquitous projects. As the wind blew, and his frightened horse recoiled from the blast, he only wrapped his cloak the closer, struck his spurs deep, and reiterated his commands for the march. The advanced guard was already forward; and the duke, with his prisoners, close followed by the main body, was soon moving on, in the regular order of the preceding days.

Progress was, however, extremely slow, and with great difficulty feasible at all. Gusts of wind at times stopped, not only the advanced picquets but compact squadrons; men were unhorsed; steeds and riders suddenly whirled round, or overthrown together; and the blocked up passage of the narrow road, more than once threw the whole into confusion. Then came the angry efforts of ill-tempered men, and the resistance of restive beasts, the loud vociferations of the chiefs; the curses of the soldiers; neighings, snortings, tramping on the paved road, splashing in the water that in places overflowed it; but all at intervals outvoiced and hushed, by the terrific roar of the west wind,

which bellowed like a troop of forest-monsters above the shrieks of their flying prey.

Philip, impatient at the obstacles which crowded the road and stopped the march, had pushed on to the front to set an example of perseverance, and disembarrass himself from the throng among whom he was crushed and hustled. The prisoners kept close to him, by his invitation. Jacqueline and Van Borselen were side by side behind the duke. Van Diepenholt and Ludwick came next, and some stragglers of the advanced guard followed without any order of precedence. Above an hour was thus consumed, and not a league yet traversed, when they arrived at a pass, formed by some wooded sand-banks on the one side, and on the other by a tolerably high dyke, or mound of earth, over which the spray of the waves dashed into the road, while its loosened and broken construction was visibly shaken, and threatened with utter overthrow by each successive sea-stroke which lashed it outside.

Standing close at the base of the mound, at times shrouded by the spray, and even during

the respites from its attacks dripping from head to feet, were four men, between the ages of twenty and thirty, each armed with the peculiar spade or shovel, used for dyke-digging labour, and all in a costume totally different from that of the inhabitants of the district where they were now found. The reader, who remembers the dress described as worn by Vrank Van Borselen's companion in the Zevenvolden, may correctly picture that of the four strangers; and Duke Philip, with those around him, who had seen, and closely remarked the countenance of that personage, thought they could trace in the half-savage and drenched features of the men now before them, a strong likeness to it—a resemblance, however, of the species, rather than the individual, such as the lion's cubs might bear to their sire. Vrank Van Borselen knew the men well; and an innate conviction, founded on this knowledge, told him they were there to do him service. He was atisfied they had not for nothing found their way from Eversdyke, where he had certain intelligence they had been four days previously;

and the place of this unexpected meeting, the air of resolution which frowned in the four faces, and, more than all, the non-appearance of *him*, who, something irresistibly whispered Vrank, was yet not far off, convinced him that some deep-laid scheme, some desperate effort for his rescue, was now on the point of execution.

With this conviction he turned to Jacqueline, who had all along contrived to keep her beautiful and spirited palfry close by the side of his, and he said to her, his face glowing the while with courageous hope,

"My own beloved one, my matchless Jacqueline, all is well; there is freedom and safety at hand."

"Count Ostervent, what mean those words?" asked Philip, sternly, and suddenly wheeling round his horse, as though the impulse which prompted his question was not altogether unaided by a disinclination to press too much forward into the strange company so close before him.

"Their meaning, duke, must be found in

their fulfilment—Heaven works for the innocent —our deliverance is at hand!" answered Van Borselen, closely pressing Jacqueline's waist within his arm.

"Who are yonder men? free Frisons, methinks?" said Philip, still urging his horse, as if to pass back to the straggling soldiers of the advanced guard.

"The sons of Oost, the dyke-digger," replied Vrank, still in a respectful tone, but without making way for the retreating duke.

"And where is their fierce father?" said Philip, looking round with an anxious stare.

"*Here* he is, Philip!" cried Oost, in his loudest and harshest key, and in the low German jargon, the only language he spoke, (though he had picked up a smattering of others,) springing at the same time from the shrubs which skirted the wood and came close to the road.

"Ah! treason! treachery!" exclaimed Philip, at the apparition of this terrible figure; and with these words he dashed forward, endeavouring to burst through the impediments to his flight. But while Oost seized his bridle

with a powerful grasp, and held his horse fast with as much ease as a common man might master the struggles of a child, Van Monfoort and Van Diepenholt, promptly seeing the state of things, closed upon the unhappy duke, who thus saw himself completely caught in his own net, and threatened with destruction by the instruments he had wrought with, as if for his own ruin.

What followed was acted with more rapidity than may be traced by pen, told by tongue, or imagined by thought. Sculpture or painting can alone embody the vivid variety of such events, and shew forth at once a group of incidents and passions, forming a living combination of all that may interest or agitate the mind.

"Away, away! There, there! The wide world is now your own;" halloed Oost, in the peculiar idiom of Friesland, which Van Borselen alone understood, and stretching forth one muscular arm towards the sea.

"Away, Jacqueline, away, my beloved!" echoed Vrank, heading his horse in the direction pointed out by Oost's rapid gesture. She

needed no more than his example or his command to rush with him into the open arms of death; and little less seemed their joint movement now, to the astonished eyes of Philip, Ludwick, and Rudolf, as they breasted the sloping dyke, and appeared to court the watery grave beyond.

"Now, now, my sons!" cried Oost to the four men—and simultaneously with his signal they each struck their weapons deep into the already loosened summit of the dyke, and with every stroke a gash was made, through which the water hissed and oozed in frightful rapidity.

"Well done, bold dyke-diggers!" said he again, and at each renewed stroke which let in destruction upon both him and them he cried—but never loosening hold of Philip and his horse's rein—"Well done, Tabbo! Bravely struck, Ubbo! Ha, ha, for Igo of the strong arm! Good, good, young Gosso, my last-born boy! Free Frisons all, for life and death!"

While Philip struggled for escape as if in the last agony, and his frightened followers all fell back in total derout, not one coming to his

aid, Van Borselen and Jacqueline had gained the top of the mound, which crumbled under their horse's hoofs, and they were a moment visible, struggling to urge the animals down the opposite side; but every effort was repelled by the fierce storm-gusts which continually forced them back, and threatened to blow them prostrate on the road. The waves now rushed freely in, and the fierce workmen, self-sacrificed, and in their dreadful task, were mid-deep in the water, mud, and sand which poured down the dyke.

Van Monfoort seeing Jacqueline's perilous situation, thought only of her, but had neither means of succour, nor a notion how to aid her. Van Diepenholt, with a clearer head, and a mind less absorbed by others' danger, resolved on an effort to escape from his own. He felt that Van Borselen must have had Oost's authority for the seeming madness of his course. He therefore pressed forward for the place where he and Jacqueline still struggled—Van Monfoort followed instinctively—they forced their horses to scramble up the mound—and just as

they reached the top, Van Borselen and Jacqueline having a moment before disappeared beyond, the whole mass came down, swept inwards by the booming sea, which rushed after in one wide, earth-swallowing deluge.

Billow after billow poured surging on, chasing each other with loud roar, like barbarian hordes shouting over the conquest of some fair and fertile land. In less time than fancy can suppose possible for such destruction, a whole district was overflowed. No hill existed to oppose—no rock to mark the depth, or measure the speed of the inundation—but the thirsty soil drank the waves, till, replete and saturated, it flung them up again, thickened, discoloured, and loathsome. Men and cattle were drowned; houses dashed down; trees uptorn; their roots wrenched from their grasp in the deep soil, and huge masses of earth scooped out by the sharp waves, and whirled up to the surface of the seething flood. The horrible rapidity of such a catastrophe in such a country left no time for flight, no place for refuge. Fate struck quick and strong. Within an hour an extent of many

square miles was under water, seventy-two villages were submerged, and full one hundred thousand human beings had perished. A new sea was formed—a whole district blotted from the world's face—and many a voyager now steers his course through the broad waves of the *Bisbosch*, without even knowing that he sails over a space once fertile and flourishing, a second Atlantis—or casting a glance into the waves, or a thought into time, for the monuments covered by the one, or the thousand associations of history and romance deep buried in the other.

In the very earliest burst of the deluge through the torn-down dyke, Oost and his four sons were suffocated by the mingled ruins. Self-immolated in the cause to which he had vowed his existence, and swore to sacrifice his life, the noble savage and his congenial children quitted the world without a pang, save those of the physical agony, which they despised. Deep in the plot which was to have burst out so soon, and in which he embarked, with his usual ferocious fidelity, Oost heard soon, like Vrouwe Bona and the rest of the confederates, of Van

Borselen's detention in Russelmonde. To rescue the Lord of Eversdyke, or perish in the attempt, was his firm resolve. His sons had no thought beyond his will. Patriarchal and feudal authority were combined in the person of every Frison father; and to bid his children follow his footsteps, and to share his fate was to have it done. Oost's quickness and sagacity were not surpassed by any wood-rousing Indian, who traverses whole wastes of forest to relieve a friend, or kill a foe. He scarcely entered on the confines of Holland, when he learned of Philip's triumphal march towards Dordrecht; and he was not long in fixing on the place in which, with the assistance of his sons, he saw a fair chance of effecting the rescue of Vrank and Jacqueline, and the destruction of Philip and such of his host, for whose safety Heaven might not interpose a miracle—but neither calculating or caring for the immensity of ruin which followed. Such was not interposed. Of all the brilliant train that followed their sovereign's steps on that wild march, not one was left to tell the tale.

But Philip's good fortune saved him from the general fate, and procured him a protector in one whom he expected to find a relentless witness of his destruction.

The unerring sagacity of Oost had made him remark and single out a sand-formed elevation, the only one near the head of that arm of sea, which was dammed out by the dyke he subsequently destroyed. It lay a few score yards northwards of the mound, and was sufficiently large and firm to act as a breakwater for its preservation, turning off the surge furiously to windward, and forming a shallow and comparatively smooth channel between it and the shore.

It needs not to be told that it was to this haven of safety that poor Oost pointed in that last exertion of devoted service, that shewed Vrank the way to freedom. And there did he and Jacqueline safely stand, just joined in time by Van Monfoort and Van Diepenholt, and all looked awe-struck back, on the sublime desolation, from which they had miraculously escaped.

As they gazed and marked the billows, frightfully populous with hideous forms of death, one living being caught their eye, clinging with convulsive grasp to the branch of an old oak, the only tree that had withstood the shock, and even that was bent and bowed down to the water, and every instant threatening to sink, like its fellows of the forest. In the drenched and agonized man, who thus grappled with fate, and buffeted the waves that washed over and threatened to choak him, the group of Providence's chosen-ones recognized the person of the magnificent, the mighty Duke of Burgundy.

Vrank Van Borselen knew no impulse then but generous humanity. Wrongs passed or intended were expunged from his memory, while the long account of princely kindnesses, and late honours received from Philip, rose swelling in his mind, more buoyant and more palpable from the warm gushing pity, which now seemed to overflow his breast.

"What!" cried he, as if a moment's internal struggle had held him back, "shall I be outdone by those half-civilized men, who have lost

themselves to save such a one as I am! Shall I let the pride of chivalry and Europe's masterpiece perish like a drowned dog!"

He waited no answer to these questions, even from himself, to whom they were put; but driving his horse headlong into the flood, and holding him well up, he was quickly borne close to the spot on the watery waste where Philip clung, almost senseless from exhaustion and fright. Vrank staid his own course by seizing another branch, and shouted to Philip to loose his hold, and drop behind him on the horse's croup. A wild stare was Philip's only notice of the summons The flood was rushing on, and had just swept round the animal into a less favourable direction, when the duke recovering a full sense of the only chance for escape, sprang actively away, gained the safe seat, and grasped Vrank's waist with one hand, still holding in the other a portion of the branch which had so long kept him up, with that tenacious clutch of giant-nerved despair. The eddying current favoured Vrank's return. He urged on his horse by hand and heel. The animal's instinct forced

it to utmost exertion. Philip was not idle in efforts to increase the speed with which it swam —and a few minutes brought it and its double cargo of mortality to the safety-mound.

There Jacqueline sat on her trembling palfry, benumbed with wet and cold, pale, shivering, and awe-stricken — yet offering up warm thanksgiving for the safety of the hero to whom her heart and soul were pledged.

Philip instantly flung himself from the horse, sank on his knees, and fell prostrate, in the deep sincerity of pious acknowledgments to Heaven. A low-murmured prayer first passed his lips, fresh glowing from his heart. He next bethought him of the man who had saved him ; and his varied emotions of admiration, remorse, and gratitude, for awhile kept him dumb.

A movement of princely munificence promptly spoke to the identity of Philip's character, and stamped it as unaltered, though at once subdued and elevated, by this awful trial.

" Here, Count Ostervent," cried he, at the same time taking the splendid collar and medal of the golden fleece from his neck and placing

it on Vrank's—"Here is the proudest distinction my gratitude may bestow. I make thee one of the noblest order which Christendom may boast—Thou art now in brotherhood and fellowship with kings! I name thee, too, lord of East and West Voorne, of Mastersdyke and Brille—I confirm thee stadtholder and governor of Holland, Zealand, and Friesland—I endow thee with—"

"Hold, hold, my sovereign!" said Vrank, "shame not an act of sheer humanity, by loading it with praise and payment due but to deeds of most heroic stamp."

"And is not this heroism? Is not the forgiveness of evil done, the snatching from perdition of a deadly foe, a deed for sovereigns to reward, and Heaven to bless? Thus, then, I make my poor atonement to thee and her whose heart enshrines thee in its core. Yes, Jacqueline, this hour of awe and dread shall witness my repentance. Thou shalt be his—he thine—both evermore each other's! I give not mere consent—but I command, implore ye, for my happiness as for your own bliss, to be

this day but one—joined in eternal bonds of marriage as of love. Look yonder at that fleet sweeping towards us with swelling sails, to rescue what is left of this sad pageant of destruction. It will soon bear us hence to shore. Let your first act of gratitude to Heaven be the union of two thankful hearts, a sacrifice more worthy than burnt-offerings! Be married this very day!"

Philip was amazed to see a faint smile, which even the awful spectacle around could not quite repress, quiver on Jacqueline's and Van Borselen's pallid lips, like a quick glancing sunbeam on a frozen stream. They clasped each other in a close embrace, but spoke not. Van Diepenholt, exchanging a significant glance with them and Van Monfoort, said in solemn accents—

"Duke Philip, thy consent, command, or entreaty, each and all come too late. Heaven has already effected what thou would'st have opposed, but might not prevent. A month gone I joined this couple in holy wedlock at the chapel-altar of Teylingen, bright love her

dowry and proud honour his inheritance, with Van Monfoort here for witness of the rite. What Heaven has joined, man may not, durst not separate!"

"Yet these impious hands, this irreverent tongue were moved to do that deed!" exclaimed Philip, with a tone of bitter remorse. "Thank Heaven I was spared an act of gloom and guilt! and now for retribution! Jacqueline, from this hour I reinstate thee in thy rights, full and unshackled mistress of all that was ever thine, and which I ought never to have looked upon with ambition's narrow glance, Countess of Holland, Zealand, Hainault—"

"No, Philip, no!" said Jacqueline in fervent and impassioned accents—"never shall those vain titles be mine again—never shall aught but the sway over one noble heart be my sovereignty! Here, in this harrowing yet hallowed scene, I renounce the pomp of worldly greatness. Devoted to privacy and bliss my days shall now run free from the agonising pangs of power. I vow myself to love retirement, and calm virtue, an humble but pure

offering to the omnipotent being who has saved us all!"

The records of history prove that the vow so solemnly made was devoutly kept.

The fleet of fisher-boats, carracks, and ships of war now came on, from every quarter where the inundation was visible. The immense expanse covered by the sea sufficed to calm its fury; and it floated in deep calm and still repletion over the tract it had engulphed, as a glutted tiger might lie down reposing on the mangled body of its prey

Few, very few, except the one group that interests us most, were snatched from death. *They* were carried safely off in one of the boats. And even in that hour, with a heart swelling with joy for her own deliverance, and horror at the wide-sweeping destruction, Jacqueline could not repress a sigh, and barely restrained a tear, for the beautiful horse who had swam with her to safety, but which was, of stern necessity, left to perish with its fellows in the fast-flowing flood that soon swept them from the mound.

The public marriage of Jacqueline and Vrank Van Borselen took place in the old halls of Eversdyke. Is the fancy of a romancer required to picture the acclamations that broke from its delighted groups—the calm and regulated pleasure of the old; the wild rapture of the young, who shared in the general joy? And can the most uncurbed imagination that ever pierced the mysteries of the human mind—tell what and how *they* felt, the pair who sat down at length in the calm sunset of wedded bliss, and in the leafy shade of private life?

Need we tell how smooth, how brilliant, how quick the years passed by? Or shall we stop the soft murmur of the stream, to dive in its placid current, seek whirlpools and rocks beneath, or tell how at length it was arrested in its course, and dashed over the brink of the dark grave?

No, we have traced what they suffered in their perilous trials. Let the knowledge of what they afterwards enjoyed be gathered from the fact, that from the moment of their second marriage their names are lost to history. What

better proof could be that their days were unbroken in upon by the world's turmoil, and their nights devoted to its forgetfulness!—the one, the only real luxury of life!

Jacqueline passed the rest of her happy existence alternately at Zuylen, Eversdyke, and Teylingen. In the last of those castles she died. And we do not envy him who can gaze on its ruins to-day, or pace the grass-covered courts, without his mind being carried back to her whose happiest and whose latest hours were passed within those time-worn walls, which read such deep and varied lessons to all who can feel and think.

For the rest we refer to history. Philip's long career of greatness and *goodness*—so called—was the wonder of his times, and is still the admiration of ours.

Glocester and his frail partner went on as might be looked for, till her unholy ambition ruined and lost them both. For their subsequent history, and that of Elinor's vile creatures, Bolingbroke, and Jourdain, Shakspeare's ever-living page must speak.

St. Pol felt the withering influence of all who crossed Philip's path of greatness. He followed his wretched brother to the grave, ere he was well seated in his sovereign chair; and was, as well as Jacqueline, succeeded by the Duke of Burgundy as his uncontested heir. Bedford was soon removed from life, full of fame—but blotted by one ineffaceable stain.

De Richemont lived long enough to make a glorious name, founded on inveterate hatred and great success against the English arms, and a large share in the deliverance of his country from the invader's grasp.

Van Diepenholt was soon confirmed in his bishopric of Utrecht—and Zweder Van Culembourg died in obscurity, as he had lived in disgrace.

Vrouwe Bona Van Borselen reached a good old age, doubly happy in the society of her dear son and the reflection of having revenged her husband. One thing alone seemed at times to darken her joy—the memory of a feeling which lingered to the last in old Floris's mind with respect to Vrank—a never-to-be-forgotten

regret, close married to resentment, that he had shewn a reluctance so degenerate, to plunge in the bliss of civil war, and to imbrue his hands (if *duty* called) in the heart's-blood of his father.

In the year 1769, nearly three centuries and a half from the period of our tale, the vaults of the chapel of the Courts of Holland in the Hague were opened. Coffins and skeletons were found. One body was almost in a perfect state of preservation, enwrapped in costly sear-cloths. It was that of a female. The head dress was garnished with rose-coloured ribbons. When the assistants of the ceremony of exhumation raised this body up it crumbled instantly to dust—the squalid skeleton and long thick tresses alone remaining, of her who was once the paragon of beauty, greatness of soul, and goodness of heart. The bones were piously reburied. The hair is to this day preserved,* as it once graced her head; and its strong natural curl, and the few straggling lines of grey, that silver its light brown wreaths, tell

* The Museum of the Hague.

how firm was the mind, how tried the heart, of her, who lived as we have told, and who died in her prime, too deeply touched by the hand of premature decay.

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